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HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN?

The circumstances into the tragic death of Eric Hughes are likely to have implications for the role of CCTV cameras and of homeless people in the borough.

For the full verdict of the inquest - expected today - log-on to our website at www.yourashford.co.uk.

■ BY ED HILL

A VERDICT is due today into the tragic death of a homeless man whose last breath was watched by council-controlled CCTV cameras.

And, remarkably, when one trader called the control room to warn the man may not survive the night, he was told simply to make him a cup of tea.

The jury at the inquest, which started on Monday and is set to conclude today, heard Eric Hughes - nicknamed The Viking - was well-known around the town.

Now it is hoped the tragic circumstances surrounding his death outside the public toilets in New Rents in November 2007 will be revealed.

Coroner Rachel Redman said the inquest was being held to establish the facts around Mr Hughes' death. She also said the case had implications for the wider public safety.

Mr Hughes was spotted by police and concerned shopkeepers in the hours leading up to his death on November 9 and CCTV crews were advised to monitor his condition.

But the council-run operators did not call for an ambulance. Instead, they simply monitored him until his body's last movement at around 5.50am the following day. His dead body was discovered two hours later. Operators say he was known to them but appeared normal.

Mr Hughes, 52, had been sleeping rough for some time and had a long-standing alcohol problem. Police spoke to him the day before his death inside the toilets in New Rents at around 3.30pm.

After they checked his condition and were

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



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TOP TV CLIPS



1 The importance of recycling during the credit crunch. See the community channel and search 'crunch'



2 All aboard as the direct Ashford to Brussels route is restored. See the community channel and search 'Brussels'



3 Modern-day Bag Lady takes to the streets of Maidstone. See the community channel and search 'bin'

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ON YOUR MARKS: The Julie Rose Stadium has many supporters, despite the funding crisis

Campaign can keep stadium in the running

MORE than 600 web users have signed up to an online group calling on Ashford council to save the Julie Rose Stadium.

The venue's future was clouded by uncertainty after council chiefs reduced its funding due to the economic downturn.

But after intensive negotiations it is hoped a deal can be struck this week to secure its future. However, it may mean the venue has to dig into cash reserves put aside for the maintenance of equipment.

And to underline public support for the Willesborough venue, hundreds signed up to a group on social networking website Facebook calling for it to be saved.

Peter Davison, chairman of the trustees, said: "We think we can get more funding that will make the operation of the stadium marginal, but this is against signing a complex legal agreement full of commitments and liabilities."

Trust members spent a busy week-end with legal advisors drawing up an agreement, but a last-minute hitch caused another delay.

Mr Davison said: "We were due to sign the agreement on Monday so it could go before the council executive, but we have not received in writing the offer made by the council. If we

■ BY ED HILL

can put all this together it will allow a degree of operation at the Julie Rose Stadium to carry on. But finances will be very tight."

The proposal would mean Ashford council would supply the stadium with extra funding but the trust would be required to use some of its own funds for day-to-day running costs.

The council is still in the process of deciding finances for the Ashford Leisure Trust which manages the stadium as well as the Stour Centre.

Mr Davison said: "It is hard with a facility like the Julie Rose to slice off savings in one area and not affect other parts of the operation."

Mr Davison said he had received a lot of support from the public regarding the stadium's future.

Cllr Gerry Clarkson, portfolio holder for cultural services, said: "In the current economic climate Ashford council is faced with making some tough financial decisions and inevitably this will mean a reduction in funding to some areas."

"Unfortunately the council can no longer afford to subsidise the Julie Rose Stadium Trust at current levels, but we see no reason for the stadium to close. We're confident we can reach a suitable solution with them soon."

yourashford
NEWS IN BRIEF

Festival brings world of music to borough

EQUATOR Music Festival has announced the line up of world music acts for its spring season.

The event starts on Saturday, March 21, with Kasai Masai and dancers performing traditional music from the Congo.

The London Bulgarian Choir will bring an Eastern European flavour on April 25 and the Mugenkyo Taiko Drummers will be performing on May 24. The season runs from March to July. Performances will be at St Mary's Church, Norton Knatchbull School, and the Brake Hall at Ashford School.

Tickets are available via www.shivanova.com, from the tourist information centre on 01233 629165, or visit 18 The Churchyard.

Project takes a bough

THE progress of the Ashford Borough Veteran Trees Project will be celebrated with an open day at the Singleton Environment Centre next month.

The project was set up two years ago with the help of a Heritage Lottery Fund grant.

Its 110 volunteers have surveyed and recorded 750 ancient trees that need to be protected for the benefit of the landscape and the enjoyment of future generations.

The free open day is from 10am to 3.30pm on Saturday, April 4, and will include a host of entertainment.

Water works planned

SOUTH East Water is to construct a new water main in Kingsnorth.

The company is planning a 500-metre section from Bluebell Road footpath to the new Park Farm East development.

Work will start in April and is due for completion by October.

Contractors will use a tunnelling machine to dig under the A2070 and the Ashford to Hastings railway line.

The Bluebell Road footpath and part of the A2070 footpath will be temporarily fenced off for safety reasons during the work.

Infrastructure development manager Graham Webb said: "We will try to keep disruption to a minimum and thank people for their patience."



For information and advice on travelling in Kent and for all our traffic regulation orders, please see the Saturday Observer or the Kent on Sunday or visit our website at www.kent.gov.uk/highways

Scores take a peek at Victoria Way scheme

■ BY ED HILL

PLANS for a "key part in the transformation of the town centre" went on show for the first time at the weekend.

More than 120 visitors turned up to see the plans behind the ambitious £17million Victoria Way scheme. It is seen as a crucial piece of the jigsaw in the borough's expansion strategy.

Victoria Way is a proposed route to the south of the town centre linking the international station and the A28 Chart Road.

The plans were on public view at Victoria Road Primary School.

Andy Phillips, head of transport for Ashford's Future, said: "There were a few initial concerns expressed by some residents, but this is to be expected when you consider the scale of the development proposed. Once the ideas were explained in more detail, the majority went away more positive about the development."

"We believe the whole area will benefit as it will provide a new route to access the town centre and station and will open up the whole area for future development including new shops, restaurants and cafes and homes."

The tree-lined route will pave the way for large



UNDER SCRUTINY: The public display of plans for Victoria Way drew scores of visitors, inset

mixed schemes such as the Zed Homes eco-development of flats and businesses. It will also include a new Victoria Square; a recreational area close to the school, mirroring the new Elwick Square to the north of the railway line.

The road has been designed to take account of the Victoria Road Primary School. A chicane has been incorporated that will slow traffic to 20mph and new traffic crossings and a cycle route will also be part of the scheme. A formal planning

application will be submitted later in March, with work beginning in 2010. The road is due to be completed in the following year. Jamie Watson, of Kent Highways which is delivering the project, said: "We anticipate the road will take some traffic away from the town centre and the ring road."

"It will be a useful route for traffic in the south of the town that wants to make its way to the A28 and Tenterden."

Stamp of approval at new post office

A SMART new post office is heading to Stanhope as part of the area's on-going multi-million pound regeneration.

The branch will be at 2 Stanhope Court on Stanhope Road, about 100 yards from the post office in Stanhope Square which will close two weeks before the new outlet opens.

Among the benefits of the new site will be low-level counters, improved wheelchair access and hearing loops.

A post office spokesman said: "We are confident customers will be pleased with the new branch."

"The old Stanhope branch will close for the last time at 1pm on April 1. The new one will open on April 17."

"I am sure customers will support the sub-postmaster in their new branch when it opens."

The nearest alternative branch will be Kingsnorth Road post office.

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A lap of the ring road ... in just five minutes. Search 'Ashford'

Do yourself a flavour at showcase of local foods

CHALLOCK is to host a farmers' market twice a month to showcase a range of local produce.

The first takes place this Friday and has already secured 17 stallholders.

On offer will be meat, bakery goods, eggs, sweets and pickles.

The initiative comes from villager Pauline Hickson. She has worked tirelessly to get the project up and running with the help and expertise of others - including a member's grant from county councillor Richard King.

The farmers' market will run on the first and third Friday of the month, from 1pm to 4pm, in Challock village hall.

It comes in the same week KOS Media, publisher of this newspaper, unveiled its 2009 campaign promoting locally produced food and drink.

It is spearheaded by the website www.foodforkent.co.uk, a collaboration with key local produce suppliers to become your essential online shopping destination.

• For full details, turn to page 11

Verdict due today into homeless man's death

FROM FRONT PAGE

satisfied that he was not injured they left the scene asking CCTV operators to keep an eye on him. He remained in the area right up until his body was discovered the next morning in the shelter adjoining the toilets. During this time he was monitored by CCTV operators in Ashford council's control room.

Later that night, Mr Hughes was seen by Andrew Hollinson, at the time, the owner of the Underside Bar, opposite the toilets. He made radio contact on the Town Net Radio Service with the CCTV control to warn them about his condition.

The inquest was played a recording of Mr Hollinson's conversation with the CCTV operators. In it he said he did not think Mr Hughes would be able to survive in the cold until the next morning.

He was told by the control centre that Mr Hughes did not fit the homeless criteria that would result in a council officer being sent out to check on him, but they suggested he make him a cup of tea to help him get warm. The court then watched CCTV footage of Mr Hughes being given tea by Mr Hollinson. The footage continued up until his death in the shelter.

Pathologist Dr David Rouse said the most likely cause of death was

hypothermia. He also said complications with alcohol had contributed to the death.

Senior CCTV operator Shirley Cunningham, who has been working in the control room for nine years, said there was nothing unusual in Mr Hughes's behaviour that night.

She said: "I had been monitoring Mr Hughes on my screen for seven years. It did not enter my mind that he was going to die that night. We did not consider calling an ambulance. He was breathing, conscious and was not hurt."

It was revealed in court that police had begun an investigation into the circumstances surrounding Mr Hughes death at the time, but had halted proceedings.

Gareth Recht, a CCTV operator who was on duty with Mrs Cunningham, said he had been verbally advised of Mr Hughes' situation when he took over his shift and had continued to monitor him. He had met him in the town two days before and had given him money to buy chocolate and clothes, and later saw him wearing new gloves.

Mrs Cunningham said CCTV staff knew Ashford's street drinkers well and in the past had often helped them with cups of tea and aid, until they had been told to stop by management.

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yourashford NEWS IN BRIEF

Plant donations will give big cats home from home

KEEPERS at the big cat section of Port Lympne Wild Animal Park are appealing to the public to donate any surplus bamboo plants, shrubbery and any types of grasses to the Aspinall Foundation.

The shrubs will be used in and round the animal enclosures to provide a more natural environment to enrich the animals' lives.

If you think you can help and want to deliver unwanted greenery directly to the park then call 01303 264647.

Man exposed himself to teenage girls in alleyway

A FLASHER who indecently exposed himself to two teenage girls is being hunted by police.

The incident occurred in an alleyway in Park Farm, on Thursday, February 19, at around 5.30pm. They were walking along Great Oak Row, which leads from Mountfield Meadow, opposite Tesco, to Moat Park.

He is described as white, late 20s early 30s, 5ft 11in tall, slim build, short black hair, unshaven and with a southern accent.

Call police on 01303 289180 or call Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

Outlet centre announces rise in sales and visitors

RETAIL figures at the Designer Outlet are bucking the national downward trend.

Centre chiefs say visitor numbers have increased in January, compared to the same time last year, and that sales were up too.

Sales in the centre's 80 stores were up by 9.5 per cent and visitor numbers increased by 4.5 per cent. This follows a successful Christmas when sales and visitor numbers were also up on the previous year.

Council is buoyed by the rude health of their staff

FIGURES produced by the council's overview and scrutiny committee suggest the council has some of the healthiest employees in the county.

Figures show the average number of sick days taken by employees was 7.88 days for 2007/8. The lowest figure amongst Kent's district councils was Swale, which had 7.35. The worst was Shepway which had 10.75.

Of the Ashford figures, 59.2 per cent were accountable to long-term sick leave.

Reduced rate service for high-speed trials?

■ BY ED HILL

COMMUTERS taking early advantage of the high-speed rail link to London this summer may be able to do so at reduced rates.

The Hitachi bullet trains will start shooting up to St Pancras for a trial service in the summer. Passengers boarding at Ebbsfleet will be able to take advantage of the service first, before a limited service starts from Ashford.

And rail firm Southeastern says it may look to get passengers to give the service a try with some discount fares.

This won't last, however. By the time the full service is introduced in December, it is anticipated the fares will be up to 35 per cent higher than existing rates.

The trains will revolutionise rail services to the capital, however, with services taking just 37 minutes.

Sarah Boumby, from Southeastern, said: "Our aim is to start preview services between Ebbsfleet and St Pancras and then it is likely that at a later date we will be able to add a limited service in the morning and afternoon to and from Ashford."

"The price for the full service year has not been set yet and it is likely that we will not say what the price will be until a lot nearer the time. We will decide what we charge for the preview services at the time."

But what if the speedy new services are



FAST: The eventual cost of using the new high-speed service is expected to be 35 per cent higher than existing rates

delayed and passengers find their travel times close to the conventional services?

Ms Boumby said: "It will be added to our passenger charter. Just as we have today, if we don't deliver our commitment and our trains are delayed then passengers will be able to claim compensation. But there is more detail that we need to go through."

A limited advertising campaign will announce the preview services on the internet and posters.

Tunde Olatunji, from Passenger Focus, said: "It will take some time for the new service to establish itself. We feel that initially prices should be at an attractive rate for travellers to be willing to get to know the service."

"The day before the service begins on December 13 most of the passengers will have been travelling to terminals further to the south such as Cannon Street, so they will have to adapt to arriving at St Pancras."

• Email yourashford@kosmedia.co.uk

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Take an online trip to Brussels

WHILE commuters prepare for the high-speed service into London which will be introduced later this year, passengers are once again now able to take a direct route to Brussels.

As we reported last week, the service returned after being ditched in 2007. It was put back on the timetable after protests from commuters and passenger groups who complained Eurostar had failed to market the service effectively first time around.

Eurostar chiefs have admitted it is likely to lose money at first, but it is hoped townsfolk who campaigned for the service will ensure they use it in their numbers and safeguard its future.

Our reporter Ed Hill was among those travelling on the first direct service from Ashford International to Brussels since the service was resumed and was armed with a video camera.

Which means you can get a taste of the big day and listen to some of the key people involved in the service - including senior figures at Kent County Council, simply by logging-on to our free, broadband TV service, www.yourkenttv.co.uk.

To access the clip simply search the word 'Brussels'. And let us know if you intend to use the service too. You can comment on every clip on our site or simply email your views direct to yourashford@kosmedia.co.uk.

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CHEERS: Frazer Thompson and Owen Elias (both centre), of Chapel Down, pick up their Taste of Kent Award

Wine-makers toast of Taste of Kent Awards

THE Chapel Down Vineyard was raising a glass to its own success this week after it scooped a prestigious award.

The Tenterden wine producers were recognised at the Taste of Kent Awards, staged at Leeds Castle on Thursday night. It won the award for best wine with its Chapel Down English Rose.

The Taste of Kent Awards, now in its fifth year, is the brainchild of the county's food and drink champions, Produced in Kent and designed to promote and support local suppliers.

Frazer Thompson, from Chapel Down, said: "We think it is one of the UK's best sparkling wines. It looks great, is good value, but most importantly tastes great."

Categories

With increasing awareness of the positive health and environmental benefits of shopping and eating locally, this year's awards attracted record levels of voting from members of the public with a 42 per cent increase in votes over last year.

A panel of expert judges then faced the challenge of whittling down the three most popular entries in each of the 12 public voting categories to one overall winner.

Produced in Kent manager Julie Monkman said: "The Taste of Kent Awards

■ BY ED HILL

are increasingly seen as the benchmark of regional quality and business innovation by the buying public.

"There has been a huge rise in topical television programmes about sourcing and eating locally produced food and drink. Consumers are more aware than ever of the health, environmental and economic benefits to be enjoyed by buying locally grown and produced food and drink from regional retailers and producers. In a tough economic climate, all these companies are playing a pivotal role in creating jobs and stimulating Kent's rural economy."

Mr Thompson says English Rose has been a huge success since the company launched it.

He said: "We had great success with our still rosé wine and pink sparkling wine is a growing market. We just had to produce something that got the balance of flavours right. It is one of our best-sellers. The truth is we just can't make enough of it."

The awards coincided with the launch this weekend of the 2009 campaign by KOS Media – publisher of this newspaper. It is encouraging all readers to buy locally produced and sourced food and drink – spearheaded by new website www.foodforkent.co.uk, which provides a one-stop shop for buying from local suppliers.

• For more on www.foodforkent.co.uk see page 11.

Carmageddon harsh lesson for students

DRAMA unravelled at South Kent College recently when students got a harsh reminder of the dangers of travelling at speed.

Kent Fire and Rescue Services descended on the campus to demonstrate just what can happen if you are not responsible behind the wheel. The drill – nicknamed Carmageddon – was designed to show the damage which can be caused and the life-changing effect failing to pay full attention to road safety can bring.

See the clip at our free broadband TV channel www.yourkenttv.co.uk. Search 'carmageddon'.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Home faces legal battle

THE daughter of a man who died at Brabourne Care Home in Willesborough says she is taking legal action against the owners.

Jean Connell's 82-year-old father, Cecil Velvick, fell while on his own at the home in October 2007, but was not taken to hospital for four days.

However, he had been seen by a doctor because he had complained of an upset stomach.

Opus Care that run the home say the authorities are satisfied that none of the actions taken by staff at the home contributed to his death.

When Mr Velvick was finally admitted to the William Harvey it was found that he had sustained fractures during the fall. He died four days later at the hospital.

The inquiry into Mr Velvick's death concluded that there was insufficient evidence to determine if neglect had occurred.

Restaurant's charity dish

THE Café Rouge in Tenterden is joining forces with Marie Curie Cancer Care this Mothers' Day. The restaurant will donate £1 from every menu sold on March 22.

Michele Jennings, from Café Rouge, said: "After the success of last year, we had to continue to show our support of such an important cause."

Charlene Asamoah at Marie Curie Cancer Care, added: "Marie Curie nurses work in the community to provide totally free care for terminally ill patients."

For information visit www.caferouge.co.uk.

Virus hits William Harvey

AN outbreak of winter vomiting bug the norovirus caused an area of the William Harvey Hospital to be closed last week.

One bay of a cardiac care unit was affected, prompting health chiefs to implement a deep-clean process and shut the bay to new patients for 72 hours.

It is estimated the norovirus affects between 600,000 and one million people in the UK every year.

Outbreaks of the illness are common, particularly within contained environments such as hospitals because the virus spreads very easily from person to person.

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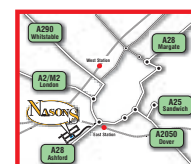
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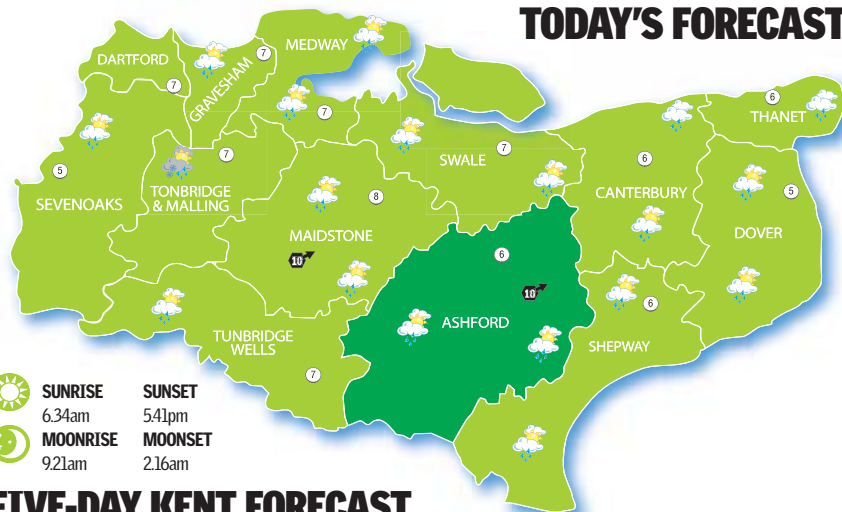
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NEWS IN BRIEF



WEEKEND HIGH TIDES

Chatham	Saturday	9:02am	5.0m
	Sunday	10:26am	5.4m
Dover	Saturday	7:44am	5.5m
	Sunday	9:00am	5.9m
Dungeness	Saturday	7:18am	6.1m
	Sunday	8:39am	6.5m
Ramsgate	Saturday	8:14am	4.2m
	Sunday	9:30am	4.5m
Sheerness	Saturday	8:50am	4.9m
	Sunday	10:15am	5.2m
Whitstable	Saturday	9:07am	4.5m
	Sunday	10:32am	4.9m

AROUND THE WORLD YESTERDAY

Amsterdam	8°C	Madrid	11°C
Athens	16°C	New York	1°C
Barcelona	14°C	Paris	11°C
Beijing	1°C	Rome	14°C
Bombay	36°C	Sydney	26°C
Cape Town	24°C	Tenerife	19°C
Cardiff	9°C	Tokyo	9°C
Gibraltar	14°C	Vancouver	11°C
Hong Kong	20°C	Warsaw	4°C
Las Palmas	16°C	Wellington	21°C

FIVE-DAY KENT FORECAST

	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon		Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon
Ashford	10°C	8°C	8°C	9°C	9°C	Gravesend	10°C	7°C	8°C	10°C	10°C
Canterbury	8°C	6°C	6°C	8°C	8°C	Maidstone	10°C	7°C	8°C	9°C	9°C
Chatham	10°C	7°C	7°C	8°C	8°C	Ramsgate	8°C	6°C	6°C	8°C	8°C
Dartford	10°C	7°C	8°C	10°C	10°C	Rochester	10°C	7°C	7°C	8°C	8°C
Dover	8°C	5°C	6°C	8°C	7°C	Sevenoaks	8°C	5°C	7°C	7°C	8°C
Faversham	10°C	7°C	7°C	8°C	8°C	Sittingbourne	10°C	7°C	7°C	8°C	8°C
Folkestone	8°C	5°C	6°C	8°C	7°C	Tonbridge	9°C	7°C	8°C	9°C	9°C
Gillingham	10°C	7°C	7°C	8°C	8°C	Tun Wells	9°C	7°C	8°C	9°C	9°C

Motorway delays after drama on M20 footbridge

TRAFFIC on the M20 was forced to grind to a standstill on Monday afternoon after a man was spotted apparently threatening to leap off a footbridge.

The drama occurred on a footbridge which crosses the London-side of the busy junction 10 at Willborough.

Police were called after the man climbed over the footbridge's railings and was seen hanging dangerously over the motorway.

It caused the motorway to be closed for ten minutes after police were deployed to the scene and caused long tail-backs.

After approximately 15 minutes the man climbed back over the railings, and walked off in the direction of Sevington.

'Mystery shoppers' part of scheme to boost retail skills

A SCHEME aimed at improving retail skills amongst shop staff is to be introduced into the town.

The programme involves an audit being carried out by mystery shoppers at stores that volunteer to take part. The shops will then be issued with a report and guidance for the staff, free of charge.

The scheme is being backed by Ashford Town Centre Partnership and The Learning Skills Council.

Ashford is one of only two centres in the south east currently able to offer the scheme.

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yourlocalinterview

QUESTION & ANSWER

ROBERT CHAMBERS



Q Can you tell me about the Victim Support service?

A Our specifically trained staff and volunteers in the community give free confidential help to victims of crime, their family and friends and other affected people.

Victim care officers based at Norman House make the first contacts with crime victims from across Kent to see if any help or support is required. They have a series of practical services they can offer straight away such as boarding up or replacing broken windows or replacing locks and bolts or referring to a community volunteer.

We can also help in any other kind of emergency caused by the crime such as provide basic replacement furniture and even help with some groceries. Community volunteers are a listening ear and provide information to allow victims to make informed choices and offer emotional support or practical help. This might include things like insurance forms or help in criminal injuries compensation. We also run the witness service in every criminal court to help those called as witnesses to crimes which can be a nerve wracking experience.

Q Victim Support is a charity, but does it have any official links with the legal system?

A We enjoy good co-operation across the county with the police, the courts and other organisations working in the community, but we are not part of the police.

Q If someone is a victim how do they make contact and how does the process work?

A The police ask every victim of a crime if they would like to be contacted by Victim Support; the details are then passed to us to make contact automatically. Our trained staff try to make contact by phone. If they cannot they send a letter giving our contact details, so long as it is safe to do so. People can also self refer by calling the Victim Support line on 0845 30 30 900. Victims do not have to report a crime to the police to access our services. Our services are free and confidential.

Q What do you think victims and witnesses get from the service?

A Reassurance and support, as well as in many cases really important practical help. Victims gain the tools and support they need to assimilate their experience and to begin to move on and make their own choices. In many cases witnesses say that the role of the service has been essential in their court appearance.

Q How did you first get involved? Is it a rewarding job?

A I became involved when the service was relocated to Ashford. It is very rewarding to be able to help people in such serious difficulties and to work with our brilliant team of volunteers. I had always known about the work of Victim Support from the TV programme Crimewatch.

Q What would you say to someone thinking of becoming a volunteer?

A Don't hesitate. Contact us to arrange to attend one of our taster sessions in volunteering held in Ashford. Volunteering is not for everyone, it requires a six-day training course and a full criminal records check. We need volunteers from every community and all walks of life to help us to reach out to everyone in need, whatever their race, beliefs, lifestyle or background. If you become a volunteer you can find it massively rewarding. It is worth the effort and there is only one way to find out if it is for you. Our local phone number is 0845 389 9527.

Q The Kent service is based in Ashford how did that come about and how does the service work around the rest of the county?

A Ashford is a great location to meet all the needs of a Kent-wide service, with ease of access and communications to all parts of the county. Community-based volunteers work from their own homes in all of the main towns and cities and the witness service is based at every criminal court.

Q Do you think that the victims of crime are often overlooked by the system and the media?

A It certainly sometimes seems that way and victims can feel as if they are forgotten or neglected. It's to meet this need that Victim Support came about as an initiative and a response from the community itself.

Q&A

Robert Chambers is volunteer and community manager of Kent Victim Support in Beaver Road Industrial Estate. He talks to **ED HILL** about the service and the role it fulfills helping victims and witnesses of crime

Richard Hammond

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EDITOR'S CHOICE

You can view all these videos and others from around the county with the click of a mouse at...

yourkenttv.co.uk

News merger turns off ITV's viewers

■ BY SIMON ROBINSON

HUNDREDS of TV viewers across Kent have vowed to switch off ITV after the station merged three news areas into one.

The ITV Meridian South East show has been combined with the Thames Valley and South shows into a single "pan-regional" broadcast.

The super region reaches a population of eight million people, 12 county councils, 86 MPs, 60 district councils – from Dover to Oxford and Medway to Portsmouth – and seven international airports.

Kent viewers have taken to ITV's message board in their hundreds to complain about the move.

Angela Fyfe, one of more than 500 viewers to hit out at the new show online, wrote: "The news area covered now is far too large."

"Nobody in the Kent area is interested in Southampton, West Sussex and so on, and I am quite sure all viewers feel the same."

"You will lose many loyal local news watchers by these changes, please think again."

"That Ginger Guy" added: "Cringeworthy television at its best. I don't bother with ITV with news anymore."

"It's dreadful that you thought saving money by making local news no longer local or watchable."

"PGC" wrote: "I have tried to be patient and give the new look programme a chance. But I'm afraid it has lost not only its identity, it has also lost its sparkle, personality and charm."



BROAD-CAST: Fred Dineage and Sangeeta Bhabra bringing you news from Southampton and Basingstoke

"The audience is there for a local news programme – but this isn't it. If ITV want to save money, this is not the answer, why drive your audience away?"

ITV's online editor Jonathan Marland said the combined ITV Meridian news bulletin – with East and West segments – have come as a result of "economic realities".

He wrote on the ITV website: "The changes have all been made against a background of massive upheaval in British broadcasting. In a nutshell ITV had an obligation to make regional news as part of the original conditions of its broadcasting

licence.

"But those conditions have been relaxed as a result of the huge number of digital stations now competing for advertising revenue, and the credit squeeze."

"This is all part of a big national debate about public service broadcasting, and who should pay for it. The problem is that PSB is expensive and cannot be maintained on a purely commercial basis."

"The government is promising to come up with a solution soon. In the meantime economic realities have forced changes across the whole PSB landscape."

University of Kent opens up a world of study in Brussels

The University of Kent markets itself as the UK's European University. It has partnerships with colleges in Germany, Spain, Austria, France and for more than ten years it has been running its own small campus in the political heart of Europe. Reporter **ED HILL** paid them a visit.

ONE small floor of an office block in Brussels is a hive of academic achievement that reaches out across the entire world.

The small institution caters for around 200 students keen to make a career in the world of international politics and diplomacy.

The city is the ideal location for the University of



CONTACTS: Marty Gaal Kent's School of International Studies due to its connection with many of the world's largest political organisations, such as the EU and NATO.

John Macgregor, dean of the school, said: "We have been here for ten years. It started off with a dozen students so it has had tremendous growth."

The courses run at the institution specialise in international relations and law, as well as many other topics. All the courses are aimed at post-graduate students.

Most of the students that attend the school come from overseas, with the majority coming from America and Canada.

Marty Gaal, 35, from Vancouver, said: "I had been living in Asia for six or seven years and needed to come back to do a PhD and I wanted to come to Europe. To find an English speaking university in Brussels met all my requirements."

"The course here has meant I have been able to make lots of contacts. I worked with the European Parliament and a consultancy firm."

The MA courses generally run for one year and have expanded to include conflict analysis, international economics and migration studies.

The University of Kent has also announced it is setting up courses in humanities for postgraduate students in Paris.

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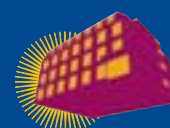
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**Ashford School of Art
and Design**

Feast your eyes on foodforkent.co.uk



■ BY CHRIS BRITCHER

KOS Media – publisher of this newspaper and the award-winning Kent on Sunday – has this week launched a major new campaign for 2009 to help boost the county's economy.

Our Buy Local Produce campaign is spearheaded by the launch of www.foodforkent.co.uk a one-stop shop allowing you to order local online, and have it delivered to your door.

We have teamed up with a host of local suppliers to make choosing fresh vegetables, fruit, fish and meat a breeze.

What's more it's cheaper than you may expect and offers the



added benefit of every penny helping boost our local economy.

It forms a key part of our campaign which looks to raise awareness of shopping locally for delicious, locally produced, food and drink.

The campaign is being supported by Produced in Kent – the non-



profit organisation supported by both Kent County Council and Hadlow College – which promotes and assists local suppliers and products.

Doug Wanstall is one of the county's best known farmers. From his land in Aldington, near Ashford, he has developed a reputation as one



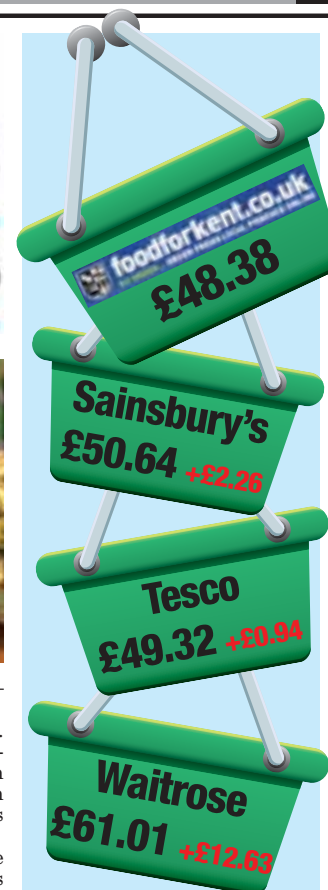
of the county's foremost suppliers – particularly in free range eggs.

He explained: "Look at France. They hardly know there's a recession there. They all drive French cars, holiday in France, eat French food, drink French wine. Its national economy supports itself.

"If we did that in Kent – if we visited the tourist attractions here, we buy local food, we drink local wine, in short, if we used all the services we have here, we, as a county could pull ourselves out of this recession quite quickly.

"I believe by supplying the likes of FoodforKent.co.uk we are helping redesign the food supply chain in Kent."

It follows hot on the heels of our Go Green – Read It Free On Screen campaign – which promoted online editions of our range of award-winning newspapers and supplements saving paper and making our free newspapers even better value.



Basket price comparison

Sample baskets contain: Granary bread, two pints milk, 4 x 150ml yoghurts, 4 x Spittire Beer (500ml), 500g Red Grapes, 1kg Gala apples, 1kg Conference pears, 4 x oranges, 1 x large mango, 1kg clementines, 2kg potatoes, 1kg onions, 1kg carrots, 1 x Savoy cabbage, 1 x red cabbage, 1kg broccoli, 500g purple sprouting, 1 x cauliflower, 600g chicken thighs, 500g pork sausages, 250g back bacon, 500g braising steak. Date: 24 February 2009. Source: mysupermarket.com. Closest match applied. Excludes Express and Metros. Excludes delivery charge. Red number indicates price difference.

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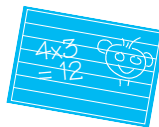
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CREATIVE: Ashford's Future representatives explain growth plans (inset) initial newspaper front page designs (main)

Students get hands-on with town's Future

GIRLS at Highworth recently got to learn all about the future growth plans for the town.

They were joined by members of Ashford's Future the group set up to implement the ambitious development of the town, targeted as a growth area by Government.

After watching a film, the Year Eight pupils were able to quiz the experts on issues such as the environment, facilities for young people, where development will happen and whether the recession will affect Ashford's growth.

They were then asked to work in groups to design a front page of a local newspaper.

Director of learning at Highworth, Alan Donovan, who organised the day said: "Four times a year we take the girls out of normal lessons and arrange days like this where they can learn important work-related skills such as team working, communication and delegation.

"The girls were really engaged with the subject and enthusiastic about creating the newspaper pages. They were also a little surprised at the level of planning that has gone into creating tomorrow's Ashford."

■ BY ED HILL

The £2.5 billion being invested in the town includes projects such as; the new high-speed rail link being introduced later this year, transport schemes such as the Smartlink bus service and transformation of the ring road, new water supplies and the expansion of large scale neighbourhoods on the outskirts of the town.

Ashford is a key growth area in the south east and is now said to be the fastest growing town between London and the Continent. It is set to double in size by 2031 and aims to create 28,000 extra jobs and build 31,000 new homes.

Linda Doran, head of economic development for Ashford's Future, said: "The growth of Ashford is about creating opportunities for the youth of today and their involvement and opinions matter.

"We were delighted to be invited to talk to the students on the future plans as they will hopefully be some of the key beneficiaries of Ashford's regeneration.

"We hope they enjoyed the day as much as we did."

BREAK TIME



RACY: Siblings Max and Grace Nicholls

Brother and sister go cross country

A BROTHER and sister team from Ashford School have taken part in the National Cross Country Championships in London.

The two young athletes had to negotiate the strenuous hills and heavy ground of Parliament Hill known as the home of cross country.

Grace Nicholls joined around 400 in the line up for the joint under-20

women's race, covering 5k from the Lido across to Kenwood House at the far end of Hampstead Heath. She finished a very creditable 12th place.

She was joined by her brother Max who was taking part in the under 13s race. He was pipped at the post and finished three seconds after the winner in second place, out of 500 competitors in the 3k race.

Around 8,000 runners took part in this year's championships. Grace and Max train with Ashford Athletics club. They will be taking part in the televised National Inter-counties match in Nottingham soon.

Specialist teacher needed for Oaks

ASHFORD Oaks School is looking for a new teacher who specialises in teaching children with conditions such as autism.

The job also includes promoting the learning capabilities of the children amongst other staff members and parents.

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Parents and pupils must toe the line, not put the boot in

SINCE the first headteacher declared their school was going to smarten up its act and introduce a uniform, it has become a perennial point of discussion.

I dread to think how many times the scriptwriters of Grange Hill used to chew over the thorny topic before creating some fine teatime drama. Or how many experiments there have been by schools up and down the country to drop and then reintroduce garb they hope will unite their students and make them the pride of their town or city.

And no parent's summer is complete without realising you need a complete overhaul of your child's school wardrobe and that it is going to cost you the equivalent of a family holiday to Greece.

However, love it or hate it, it fulfils an important role. It provides a sense of belonging; a sense of community. And, crucially, it makes

the kids look smart and focused on getting their heads down and doing some work. Or, at least, I guess that's the aim.

Schools are sometimes too strict and parents can be over-sensitive. But last week there was a story which really did defy belief.

Christ Church is an establishment which has battled with more than its fair share of negative headlines over recent years. And last week it managed to create some more after a pupil's parents complained about the handling of their child in a dispute over school uniform.

The facts, in a nutshell, were as follows. The school sent letters home during half-term making it clear that to eradicate problems with a minority it would be cracking down on any bending of the uniform rules.

So when the youngsters came back, one girl had pink stitching on her shoes. She was told to either colour it in with black marker pen or go home. She went home.

Her parents kick up a stink and the school is given a drubbing. This can't be right. Surely, if

the school insists on strict uniform rules, then parents have to toe the line. If the rules say black shoes it means black shoes. Not black shoes with bright pink stitching.

It's not the biggest deal in the world, but the school wants to show it expects pupils and parents to pull together and show respect for its position in the community. If parents decide not to listen, I don't see why they are suddenly in a state when the school makes its displeasure known.

The only fault the school seemed to demonstrate is that the teacher sending the pupil home was not backed up by colleagues when the angry parents descended on the school.

It's easy to mock schools. Easy to criticise their policies. But it's just as easy to buy plain shoes rather than make everyone look silly.

EDITOR'S NOTE: All blogs are supplied with full name and address of the authors. They do not reflect the view of the newspaper but are designed to give our readers the chance to air their views.

GET IN TOUCH...

We want to hear your views



EMAIL: Letters, comments, views (along with your name) to: yourashford@kosmedia.co.uk



TEXT: **ASH** then your message to: 81800 (please remember to include your name)

LET US KNOW...

If there is a story in your area you think we should be covering contact the editor, **Chris Britcher**, on 01303 817171 or email him on the details above. If you want to be the next Ashford blogger then all you have to do is submit an article to us (of around 550 words) and email it to the editor. And don't forget, for all the latest news and video from your town log-on to www.yourashford.co.uk.

Write to The Editor, YourAshford, KoS Media, Apple Barn, Hythe Road, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SR.

* We cannot guarantee all articles will be published and all are at the editor's discretion

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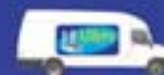
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As we step into spring, discover our fantastic womenswear collections, offering you style and glamour at great value. Check out our range of high street fashion, inspired from this season's catwalks. Our chic Romance look with beautifully structured ruffles and neutral colours brings a strong element of femininity to this spring, while our

strong Japanese influence with loose tailoring creates another significant trend.

Don't miss out on your chance to get fantastic Mothers' Day gifts. Every mum loves to be pampered, and that's why Debenhams has the most exciting range of fragrances and pampering gift ideas to celebrate Mothers' Day. Treat her to our wide range of celebrity scents, sumptuous skincare and make-up – enough to make her look and feel gorgeous!

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This season there's a wide range of collections to choose from, with something to suit every shape, size and budget.

Debenhams draws on a variety of influences from around the globe

and whatever your individual style, you will be spoilt for choice with exclusive collections from our amazing Designers at Debenhams, including Rocha, John Rocha, Star by Julien Macdonald and Betty Jackson, Black.

Your little ones can also look as stylish as you this season. As we offer great value collections for kids aged 0-16 years in a variety of styles from exclusive Designers at Debenhams including Junior J by Jasper Conran, Rocha, Little Rocha. For

the younger child St. George by Duffer offers embellished logo tees and hoodies for boys, and for the girls Butterfly by Matthew Williamson presents pink floral dresses, white denim and rainbow bright accessories.

KOS Media and Debenhams have teamed up to offer three lucky readers the chance to win £100 each to spend in store.

To enter, answer the question below and send your entry on a post-card along with your e-mail address (if applicable), name, address, and daytime telephone number to Debenhams Comp, KOS Media, Apple Barn, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent, TN25 6SR.

Closing date: March 13, 2009.
Question: When does the New Season's Spectacular sale taking place?

No purchase necessary. For full Terms and Conditions please visit www.kent-news.co.uk or for a posted copy of the T&Cs call 01303 817073. If you do not wish to receive any literature please write 'no literature' on your entry.



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TALK TIME

MARILYN FISHER

Volunteer for Hospices of Hope, at 4 New Rents in the town centre, which raises money hospices in the Balkans



Why did you become a volunteer at the shop?

I wanted to put something back for people. The shop has been here nearly three years.

The charity was started in Kent by Graham Perolls in Dartford just after the fall of Ceausescu's regime. The money that we raise goes to help pay for hospices in Romania and other parts of the Balkans. We have a partner hospice in Casa Sperantei in Romania which is now a centre of excellence and are also carrying out work such as training in Bucharest, Serbia and Montenegro. Sadly only a tiny minority of people have access to hospice care in the region which leads to terrible hardship and suffering.

We now have quite a few shops and tearooms around the South East and also in Edinburgh.

There are lots of charity shops in Ashford.

How do you all get along?

We've a lot of co-operation from the other shops in the town and we like to help each other if we can. For example, if we are given electrical goods which we can't sell, we give them to the shops that are able to test them and sell them and we take furniture from other shops. At the end of the day we are all just trying to help people.

How is the world economic situation affecting the charity?

It is having an impact. Salaries in the health sector in Romania have gone up by 46 per cent at the same time as some of our sources of support are drying up.

We need to ensure that what we have built up in the Balkans will be preserved.

YOUR LETTERS



Cash for school, but will a quick fix be enough?

KENNINGTON Junior School will get £300,000 of essential improvements, despite poor state, says teachers and committee chair based on

School improvements to cover the cracks

I read, as a parent, the article on funds allocated to Kennington Junior School for improvements with interest.

Is anyone going to review, and report, the process as to why the original modernisation project failed?

Even at £300k this is papering over of the cracks. We want a school for the 21st century and not one fit for Oliver Twist.

Yes, build a school at Goat Lees but in addition to and not instead of Kennington Juniors. Let's build our communities around quality schools to be proud of.

Sally Robinson
Comments left on
www.yourashford.co.uk

Buses no comfort in the long run

You report that between them, Kent County Council and



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And remember, www.yourashford.co.uk is updated daily, bringing you the latest, breaking news from across Ashford and Tenterden as well as our villages. We will include the best on these pages too – ensuring your comments reach the widest possible audience. In addition, if you find your newsagent, supermarket or petrol station runs out of Yourashford before you've picked up your copy, you never need to miss out.

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Stagecoach are to put a dozen new modern buses on the comparatively short routes to and from Ashford and the local estates.

When are KCC and Arriva going to find the money to get rid of the very old buses on the No 12 and 400 routes serving Tenterden?

Most people I know will only resort to using these routes if

they have no alternative as the vehicles are so decrepit and uncomfortable. All the Kent towns with Park and Ride also have modern buses for very short journeys, so when are the powers that be going to wake up to the fact that the longer bus routes should also have comfortable transport?

Peter Lake
Tenterden

Taser gun increase may trigger debate



Taser use not just a shot in the dark

In response to letters in your newspaper last week questioning the move to secure more tasers, I see the Kent Police Authority has agreed to seek Home Office investment for more tasers.

The Chief Constable has put forward an operational case to Police Authority members and we fully support the argument. The Chief Constable and his team have the Authority's full backing on this matter.

We understand the legitimate public concern but tasers are only deployed in strictly controlled circumstances. Officers are given rigorous training and we know from our research that tasers contribute massively to officer and public safety and most importantly are another tool that can help diffuse difficult and dangerous situations.

Mark Gilmartin,
Chief executive, Kent Police Authority

Low council tax rise a Tory smokescreen

As always at this time of year, the Conservatives are claiming they have kept council tax down, while making savings and

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maintaining services. They also claim they are doing that despite supposedly getting so little funding from central government.

Their claims, as always, are spurious.

The bulk of our council tax goes to Kent County Council. The Conservatives, who dominate KCC, are imposing what they call the lowest recorded rise, 2.44 per cent. They are doing this because they know the Government will take action if they go above five per cent.

But, more importantly, they are keeping the rise in council tax low this year because there are county council elections in June.

Even a casual glance at the Conservatives' record will show that in election years they come up with a low council tax increase and we pay for it the following year.

They are also keeping council tax rises low by keeping staff pay down for the lowest paid (the people who provide the services to the public) while ignoring calls for a review of pay for those on six-figure salaries.

They could get rid of pet projects like Kent TV and HealthWatch, but have chosen not to. At the same time they are reducing funding to, for example, the already under-funded youth service.

All this while they have had above-inflation increases in grants from the Government throughout this decade, as well as now enjoying the stability of knowing what those grants will be for three years at a time.

Mike Eddy
Labour leader of the Opposition,
Kent County Council

Thatcher and Blair's legacy of failure

Blatcherites have taken advantage of the public by their dominance in politics. They have pinched and redistributed taxpayers' money into the most undeserving pockets in the land.

Blair, Thatcher and their successors did little for England. Is that why they were so keen to meddle overseas? They have manipulated the honours system. They are complacent over financial fraud and maladministration throughout the public and private sector.

Their record is littered with broken promises of wealth for all: ie, high-speed technology, North Sea Gas, privatisation of rail and utilities, an endless list of failed initiatives and public policies that were impossible to deliver.

Once-productive businesses lie in ruins, meaning misfortune for millions but not for the perpetrators who brought the country down.

We are paying for those who demand revenue but never give value for what they take, especially not their inflated salaries and final salary pensions. It is not just bankers who have ruined the economy but all are protecting themselves while we suffer the consequences. Why are MEPs able to claim £1 million over five years from the public purse?

Financial abuse by institutions is too profitable. Creating honours and Lords is too easy. We have sacrificed

is freedom and the truth. Is the public responsible for the inexorable tide of corruption and sleaze that denies us a voice and choice?

R Grootendorst
by email

Too much meat could raise diabetes risk

Experts warned this week that UK diabetes rates are soaring, and there is a strong link with the country's expanding waistline.

This tallies with a new scientific report by health charity the Vegetarian & Vegan Foundation (VVF). The report investigates the links between white meat consumption and health.

White meat contains more than twice as much fat as it did in 1940, a third more calories and a third less protein. Meat is the one food most linked to weight gain around the waist.

A chicken carcass contains almost a pint of fat, and organic chickens aren't much better nutritionally.

There is also a clear link with diabetes. Eating just one or more servings of meat per week increases the risk. People eating a 'low-meat' diet for 17-years had a staggering 74 per cent increased risk.

For recipes using tasty, healthy, meat alternatives, call the VVF on 0117 970 5190 – or visit www.vegetarian.org.uk.

Amanda Woodvine
The Vegetarian and Vegan Foundation

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Bands prepare to beat it out in festival play-off final

■ BY SIMON ROBINSON

FOUR bands will contest a festival-themed battle of the bands final next weekend – with the winner earning the right to play alongside Brit pop heavyweights Supergrass.

The winner-takes-all final will take place at Folkestone's new Quarterhouse venue on Saturday, March 14.

Dartford-based rock outfit Burgundy and Canterbury folk-rockers Waterhorse will join The Little Philistines and Monday Street, both of London, in the play-off for a place on this year's Sellindge Music Festival main stage bill.

Thoughts of sharing a backstage arena with the likes of Supergrass are but one performance away for one of the bands.

And they know the pressure to perform is now on.

Waterhorse frontman Terrence Reis said: "Whoever takes the final will have had to fight for it and play their hearts out."

The Little Philistines added that sharing the line-up with Supergrass would be a dream come true, saying: "They inspired more than one of us to pick up the guitar for the first time."

"It would be an honour to share a stage with Gaz' chops."

The Battle of the Bands contest was staged at the Frenchman in Folkestone over two nights in January and February.

The four finalists were picked from ten competitors, who had been hand-picked from hundreds of hopeful applicants.



Festival manager Benjamin Wells said the standard had been exceptionally high.

He said: "All ten bands that competed gave an amazing live performance."

"Deciding on the finalists was incredibly difficult but we made the right choices and have a truly special line-up for the final."

Sellindge Music Festival – now in its second year – takes place from Friday, June 5 to Sunday, 7.

The festival line-up already boasts the likes of Mickey Slim, Eddy Temple Morris and Brandon Block.

No acts have as yet been confirmed for the acoustic or introducing tents and Supergrass are the only band unveiled as playing the main stage.

For more information visit www.sellindge-musicfestival.co.uk.



BATTLE OF THE BANDS: Waterhorse (top) and The Little Philistines (above) are two of the bands hoping to share Sellindge festival line-up with Supergrass

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MUSE ON THIS: The Suspects live at The Elephant & Castle in Ramsgate



THE ETHER: Lucy Kitt speaks to Charley Vines about how her music career began



TOP FIVE KENT GIGS

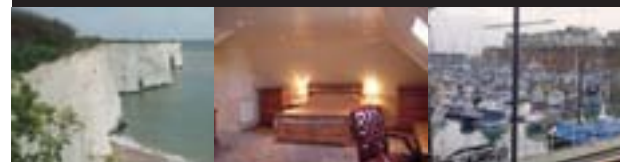
- 1 Los Salvadores – 14/3 Ivy Leaf Sheerness
- 2 Kayley Weller – 21/3 The Half Moon Hildenborough
- 3 The Suspects – 11/4 The New Inn Minster-in-Thanel
- 4 Dorcia – 17/4 TW Forum Tunbridge Wells
- 5 The Suspects – 10/5 Churchills Ramsgate

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COOL RIDER: Two days of free excitement are on offer as bikers compete for the Big Sky Beach title on the golden sands of Margate

On yer bike

Head down to the sands to watch the races as riders compete for the title

PREPARE for some high-octane action on the sands when the QRA Margate Big Sky Beach Cross Weekend gets under way.

Spectators are promised an even bigger and better event than ever before, with lots of attractions and thrilling racing to keep people entertained both days.

Racers will be battling for glory on the one-and-a-half-mile Moto Cross-style course, built with the help of Ovenden Plant Hire in the sands beneath the promenade. Spectators can enjoy excellent viewing of the action as they look down on the racers.

At the time of writing, the busy schedule of racing is due to start with a parade of riders making their way along the promenade to the beach at 9.30am on Saturday and again on Sunday, setting the wheels in motion for two days of exciting competition.

Practice begins at 10am, followed

QRA MARGATE BIG SKY BEACH CROSS WEEKEND

Saturday and Sunday, March 7-8
Margate Main Sands



by qualifying heats or racing from 10.30am. The country's top adult and youth quad and adult solo riders will be chasing the coveted Margate title at full throttle, with events running until 5pm both days.

After all the excitement of the races, the Grand Finale will be held on the Sunday. The top riders from each quad class will race each other to determine the fastest racer on the sands. The presentation of awards is due to take place at 4.30pm on Sunday.

On Saturday night, DJ Stumpy will host a social evening for competitors and their guests at the Smiths Court Hotel in Eastern Esplanade, Cliftonville, from 8.30pm.

The QRA – Quad Racing Association – and Margate Town Partner-

ship have been working hard to create a fun weekend for all the family.

There will be trade stands for petrol-heads to indulge their passion and lots more off-beach entertainment. If the exhilarating racing leaves anyone in the mood for some adrenaline-fuelled thrills, there will be fairground rides to keep the screams and laughs coming.

Best of all, admission to the event is free. With no charge for spectators, the QRA Margate Big Sky Beach Cross is a recession-beating day out for all the family.

Since it began in 2007, the event has proved phenomenally popular with racing fans and attracted a lot of media interest.

With only riders and officials having access to the sands, every inch of the beach can be used to create an exciting and challenging course in a relatively small area.

For more details about timetables, the event's history and other helpful information, visit the website at www.margatebeachcross.com.



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MADAME BUTTERFLY

Saturday, March 7
Cineworld, Ashford



THE tragic story of Madame Butterfly is performed by the Metropolitan Opera this weekend.

Opera fans can take advantage of a remarkable opportunity to see the New York company in action, the latest in a series of live high definition broadcasts to

Cineworld cinemas. Cristina Gallardo-Domas returns to play the title role in the late Anthony Minghella's lavish production, opposite Marcello Giordani.

When Lieut Pinkerton of the US Navy rents a house in Nagasaki harbour, he finds that the price includes servants and a geisha wife called Cio-Cio-San, also known as Madame Butterfly. Pinkerton goes through with the marriage ceremony,

but he is not sure how he feels about the geisha and pledges to one day take a 'real' American wife.

Three years later, Madame Butterfly is devastated when Pinkerton returns with his new wife Kate.

She agrees to give up her small son, on the condition that Pinkerton comes back to fetch him.

Tickets cost £14.70/£11.70. Book at www.cineworld.co.uk or call 0871 2002000.

ALL STAR SUPER SLAM WRESTLING

Friday, March 6
Leas Cliff Hall, Folkestone



TOP wrestlers from both sides of the Atlantic will go head-to-head in the exciting family show, All Star Super Slam Wrestling.

'Vampire Warrior' Gangrel has assembled a crack team of wrestlers from the US and other countries to take on our home-grown talent. Lining up with him is 'Man Mountain' Rocky Rainier, a Puerto Rico-based giant standing 6ft 9in tall and weighing in at nearly 20 stone.

Londoner James Mason leads the home front, including 'Liverpool Lads' Robbie Brookside and Frankie Sloan, Kid Cool and 'Xtreme' Dean Allmark and pocket whirlwind Little Legs.

The world-class skirmishers will be supported by action from the ladies, including Sweet Saraya, Lancashire stunner Lisa Fury, Erin Angel, 'Norfolk Doll' Brittany Knight and Midlands ace Minx.

The show starts at 7.30pm and tickets cost £12, concession available, or £35 for families of four. To book call 0844 8471776 or see www.leascliffhall.org.uk.



PETER BRUNTNELL

Monday, March 9
Zebra Bar, Maidstone



DISCOVER the artist who has been hailed as 'one of England's best-kept musical secrets' when Peter Bruntnell visits Kent.

Since the release of his debut album 14 years ago, Bruntnell has been considered one of the county's best songwriters with a strong stage presence. The West Country-based artist has toured with acts such as Squeeze and The Handsome Family and is now touring his seventh album, Peter And The Murder Of Crows.

His career-defining album Normal For Bridgwater, featuring contributions from members of Son Volt, established Bruntnell in the US and led to Rolling Stone describing him as one of England's hidden gems, with his heavy country-rock.



The concert will be opened by talented singer-guitarist-songwriter Kit Holmes, who has established herself as a rising star on the UK acoustic scene. Critics have likened her sound to Nick Drake and Macy Gray, while

her second album, Catch The Star, earned her a five-star review in Maverick music magazine.

The concert starts at 8pm and tickets cost £10 in advance or £12 on the door. To book call 01622 744481.

ASHFORD LEISURE

Light Orchestra tribute promises to be electric

REVISIT the live sound of the Electric Light Orchestra when a top tribute act visits Tenterden.

Recreating the fantastic sounds of the legendary band, The ELO Experience comprises experienced musicians who can bring magic to the stage.

The concert starts at 7.30pm on Saturday. Tickets cost £12, call 01580 763826 or see www.sindentheatre.biz.

Band gives their own twist to popular rock

GET ready to hear classic rock songs as you have never heard them before when Zambu plays in Ashford.

The four-piece performs tracks by the likes of Queen, Pink Floyd, Muse and more, with their own added twist. Hear sample tracks at www.zambu.co.uk. Zambu will be at the George Hotel in High Street on Saturday. For more details call the pub on 01233 625512.

Help conservation take flight by raising funds

YOUNG people are asked to raise funds to help protect the Sumatran rainforest.

The Indonesian Government has given the RSPB and partners Burung Indonesia and BirdLife International a 100-year lease to look after part of the rainforest. Now the RSPB is asking children to get involved by raising money through sponsored activities. For details visit www.rspb.org.uk/youth.

Tell our readers about your planned events

WOULD you like to see your concert, production or event on these pages?

Send details – including dates, times, ticket prices and how to book – to jane.connolly@kosmedia.co.uk or by post to the address on page 2, at least two weeks before preferred date of publication.

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THE INTERNATIONAL (15)



Clive Owen stars as Interpol agent Louis Salinger, who, together with Assistant District Attorney Eleanor Whitman, sets out to bring the world's most powerful bank to justice.

FRIDAY THE 13TH (18)



A lone traveller heads to the woods in search of his missing sister. There he hooks up with a group of college kids planning on a weekend of partying. But their fun soon turns into a nightmare.

Isla's shopped around for her first leading lady role

■ BY SHEREEN LOW

SHE may play a shopaholic in her latest film, but Isla Fisher says her real life doesn't imitate her art.

"I don't really enjoy shopping, I have to be honest. There's always so many people in the store, and so many choices," she says.

"More often than not, because I'm often shopping out of necessity, rather than it being a fun way to spend the afternoon, it's just me with a mission – in and out, and pick out whatever it is that I need."

The 33-year-old mother of one says she has little in common with her new character, fashion addict Rebecca Bloomwood in Confessions Of A Shopaholic, adapted from Sophie Kinsella's chick-lit bestseller.

In fact, you're more likely to catch Isla flashing the credit card for culinary gadgets than for the latest wardrobe must-have.

"I do like bags and shoes, but I'm a bookaholic at the moment, especially cookbooks," she says, grinning. "I seem to always be collecting cookbooks. It's wish fulfilment."

Just like die-hard shoppers who sometimes keep unworn purchases with their tags intact, the Australian actress finds herself in the same situation with cookbooks.

"I'm embarrassed to admit, there are a couple that haven't been opened. I buy Asian cookbooks and it's hard to find the ingredients – that's my excuse. I'm just lazy," she adds.

Confessions Of A Shopaholic marks the former Home And Away star's first major starring role on the big screen, although she has previously wowed audiences in Wedding Crashers, Horton Hears A Who and Hot Rod.

"I've been acting for a really long time and I felt, finally! I was as prepared as I could be,"



HOME AND AWAY: Isla Fisher's career has transformed

she says. "I knew I was responsible for the tone of the movie in a way I hadn't been as a supporting cast member."

"I knew the character was very beloved and I didn't want to disappoint the readers, but as nerve-wracking as it was, once I got going and started shooting the movie, I was so physically exhausted – I was breast-feeding every three hours – and trying to juggle every-

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thing that it just became about endurance."

Isla, who is engaged to British comedian Sacha Baron Cohen, gave birth to baby Olive in October 2007. She admits her fiancé is responsible for getting her the parts that have shaped her career.

"He got me into comedy. I was auditioning for dramatic roles and not having much success, and he said to me 'You're really funny, you should do comedy'. It was those words that inspired me," she recalls.

Isla has a dream to collaborate with her husband-to-be: "I would love to work with Sacha. I think he's the funniest man in the world. It'll be amazing. But not right now. At the moment I'm not working and I don't feel like working. I'm really lucky to be in a position that I am."

CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC

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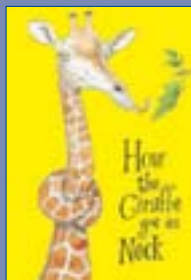


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yourashfordstyle



BEFORE AND AFTER: (Inset) Reporter Erica Jones when she arrived at the Saks Hair and Beauty salon; and (main) after her pampering session which included foot massage, facial, head massage and haircut



Pure Saks appeal

THERE are worst ways to spend my morning than meeting Emily and being carefully guided through an array of potential beauty treatments.

After a 'lifestyle consultation' – which involved discussing my bad eating habits, 'beauty regime' and problem areas (dark circles under tired eyes) Emily recommended the rather exhilarating sounding anti-ageing visible brilliance facial. It would, she explained, help my eyes whilst also doing lots of lovely things to rejuvenate and tone the skin. Who was I to complain?

Now, call me naïve, but I always thought a facial was, well, face-centric... yet before anything touched my cheeks, I was treated to a quite remarkable foot massage.

If ever there is a way to get someone relaxed, this is it. It was a hot lime foot cleanse, and my tired, abused feet were very grateful for the attention. I was almost sorry when Emily stopped to begin the work proper.

The facial itself used the popular range of Elemis products, a British brand which, it claims, can 'awaken the senses' while making you look and feel like a million dollars.

It involved a variety of beautiful smelling creams, before a cool, but strangely pleasant, facemask was smoothed over my face. Whilst this was left to set, my head was massaged, before the mask was gently peeled from my face, taking all the dead skin away with it. A second mask was applied to nourish the new

fresh-er skin with nutrients and vitamins to leave me with a refreshed glow to my complexion. The treatment was complimented with a hand and arm massage to give time for all that goodness to soak in.

By the time it was over I was impressed to notice a real healthier glow to my skin – especially my troublesome eyes.

Regardless of that, however, the experience was worth every penny (treatments cost £59-£65) just for the inner peace and calm it brought me.

The hair salon

As someone who's used to simply asking for her split ends to be tidied up I found it a novel experience to have a full consultation with careful questions regarding my own hair care regime before we even began talking about the cut.

Like most, I'm reliant on my straighteners,



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yourkenttv.co.uk

This year Saks Hair & Beauty celebrates 35 years in business. We sent reporter **Erica Jones** to discover the secret to its success and endure several hours of pampering all in the name of investigative reporting.



TOTAL RELAXATION: Elemis products were used for Erica's facial and left her skin with a noticeable healthier glow, especially around her "troublesome" eyes

and manageress Sam highlighted the importance of treating my heat-damaged locks with TLC and recommended my session began with a professional Kerastase instant ritual mask (£6) to help revive the hair. This was applied whilst I was having my hair washed (with added bonus of a head massage thrown in). We also discussed what I wanted from my haircut (£37-£45). Not ready for anything too different, I asked for a bit of a tidy up. My hair can suffer sometimes from being a bit uncontrollable, and Sam was able to suggest layers would help tame it – a move which has proven to be beneficial and my

hair is much easier to style.

During all the snipping we further discussed my hair care regime, with Sam providing me with tips for nurturing my hair through the winter months. Not only are intensive cleaning products (she recommended the L'Oreal professional range) and a good heat protector spray a necessity, but it turns out washing my hair daily is a little too much, a welcome thought when it means I can have an extra five minutes in bed in the morning.

I can also confidently add that as I write five days later my hair, rather remarkably, still feels as soft as when I left the salon, so that mask really did do the trick.

SAKS has two salons in Kent, both offering a range of treatments and staffed by experienced beauty teams. From facials to waxing, hair removal to hair extensions, they have treatments to suit most budgets.

Our reporter visited the Maidstone branch, which is part of the David Lloyd Fitness complex in Lockmeadow. The other branch is in Kings Hill.

Saks Hair & Beauty, David Lloyd Fitness, Barker Road, Maidstone, ME16 8RG. www.saks.co.uk To book an appointment call 01622 663233. Or Kings Hill Avenue, West Malling, Kings Hill, ME19 4UA. Tel: 01732 843 445.

ASHFORD SHOPPING

Could your baby snap up the cutest crown?

COUNTY Square Shopping Centre is on a mission to find the cutest children in Ashford in its annual baby photo competition.

Now in its 16th year, this popular annual event is open to youngsters in four age groups: 0-1yrs, 1-2yrs, 2-3yrs and 3-5yrs. Photographers will be in the centre for two weeks from March 14.

The official judging will take place the following week. To enter your baby or toddler, just come in to the centre.

Sniff out a Red Nose Day cookie at Subway

HELP to raise some dough for Comic Relief by buying a tasty Red Nose Day cookie from Subway.

The sandwich chain is stocking the limited edition cookies in the run-up to Red Nose Day on Friday, March 13. Each freshly baked biscuit comes with its own cute red nose and are available in packs of three, priced from £1.20. For each pack sold, 5p will be donated to Comic Relief.

To find your nearest Subway store visit the website at www.subway.co.uk.

Men, it's time for some Olympic-style shopping

MEN can support Fairtrade Fortnight by buying their spring attire from the FiveG collection at Debenhams.

The range has been designed by Olympic gold medallist Sir Steve Redgrave and created using Fairtrade cotton. Shoppers can show their support for the fortnight, which finishes on Sunday, by making purchases from the collection.

View the range in stores or online at www.debenhams.com.

For peat's sake give the environment a thought

B&Q is helping to make gardens greener and more sustainable by banishing 100 per cent peat bales from its stores.

Peat takes thousands of years to form and now 90 per cent of peat bogs in the UK have been destroyed. With the support of award-winning garden designer and TV presenter Chris Beardshaw, the company has discontinued 100 per cent peat bales. Peat alternatives are available at B&Q. To find out more about B&Q's peat initiatives visit www.diy.com.

Body Shop flowers with free gift to customers

THE Body Shop has launched its new Roseflower make-up collection and is offering customers a free gift when they spend more than £25.

The new refreshing collection is inspired by the modern day romance of a rose and uses pink, gold and baby blue tones to create the look. When shoppers spend more than £25 on any products in store or online they will receive a free beauty bag filled with spring's must-haves.

See in store or www.thebodyshop.co.uk.

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Evolution II has two height settings for cleaning both carpet and hard floors and an extra wide 23.5cm sweeping path with a long coated steel handle that lies flat for cleaning under furniture.

The long life natural bristle brush efficiently sweeps up crumbs and dirt left behind by children and pets and the large capacity dustpan is easy to empty. Other features include a soft furniture guard and it also automatically cleans its own brushes. The Evolution II is available in silver for £29.99 and makes a perfect companion for your vacuum cleaner.

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YOUR TV REVIEW

■ BY TOM BETTS

 **FRIDAY NIGHT WITH JONATHAN ROSS**
BBC One, 10.35pm, Friday

 **AL MURRAY'S MULTIPLE PERSONALITY DISORDER**
ITV1, 9.30pm, Friday

THE controversy surrounding Jonathan Ross and Russell Brand last year was only ever going to do one thing – increase interest in both personalities and their subsequent projects.

While the furore claimed Brand's radio job, the more established star managed to get off with a suspension and keep his multi-million pound contract.

The return of his late-night talk show, which is by far Britain's most popular, was eagerly anticipated.

Many wondered if the host would be able to continue with his risqué humour and close-to-the-bone interview style, which has proved so successful, or whether he would tone down matters.

Perhaps it was a question that was always going to be a non-starter, because Ross really does know only one style, which I'm sure will please his legion of fans.

What has been a welcome change though is that his maddening habit of constantly talking about himself has dropped away somewhat.

During the last series, and the many that have gone before, it had become a show about the man himself rather than the guests.

Almost every conversation inevitably ended up being about Ross rather than who was sitting beside him, no matter how big the star.

With all the fuss now dying down, the show seems to have benefitted from the break and a more humble,



TALKING IT UP: Ross has toned down his chat show antics after finding himself in hot water

slightly less self-obsessed Ross is actually a much better interviewer.

And, after all, that is what a chat show is supposed to be all about.

So if the cloying banter had led you to switch off before, the show is worth revisiting for a second look.

I can't say that Al Murray's the Pub Landlord character ever really split my sides.

Mildly amusing maybe, but not the genius comic creation that some would have you believe.

Murray has scored his own sketch show on the back of the continued success of the pint-pulling xenophobic anti-hero though, and it started last week with a patchy affair that showed both dashes of promise and disappointment.

As a Perrier Award-winner Murray can count the likes of Steve Coogan and Lee Evans among his peers, but it will be interesting to see if he can throw off the shackles of his best-known character, show he is more than just a one-trick pony and pull off a more varied endeavour.

YOUR WEEK'S HOROSCOPE

BY RUSSELL GRANT



AQUARIUS (Jan 21-Feb 19)
DON'T be surprised if romantic sparks fly between you and someone you meet over the next few days; they're attracted by your unusual outlook on life. If you're already in a relationship, your partner will see a pleasant change in the way you act think and love.
• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Aquarius** 09067-531762



TAURUS (Apr 21-May 21)
LOOKING back on a difficult relationship puts your current situation in perspective. You're starting to see a trend. By avoiding the sort of people who have made your life miserable, you'll reach the lifestyle you've always desired. It's important to steer clear of martyrs.
• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Taurus** 09067-531753



LEO (Jul 24-Aug 23)
RECONSIDER the values you have held dear for the past few years. It's possible they are no longer practical or realistic. Be ready to explore different points of view. Going back to the religious and cultural practices of your ancestors could throw a light on your views and values.
• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Leo** 09067-531756



SCORPIO (Oct 24-Nov 22)
YOU have a rare opportunity to go back and correct some old mistakes. A female employer may be very impressed with your work. Don't be surprised if she offers you a good job. It's also possible that an old boss will ask you to come back into the fold.
• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Scorpio** 09067-531759



PISCES (Feb 20-Mar 20)
MONEY that was owed to you some time ago could finally be repaid. Use it to get something you've always wanted, but didn't dare buy. You're long overdue for some luxurious treat that you don't necessarily need, but desperately want. If you're stumped for ideas, ask a loved one.
• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Pisces** 09067-531763



GEMINI (May 22-Jun 21)
GETTING back in touch with an old group of friends will be lots of fun. These people will remind you of a time when you had much bigger dreams. Maybe this is a sign you need to champion some of those goals anew. You're not the type who can rest on their laurels.
• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Gemini** 09067-531754



VIRGO (Aug 24-Sep 23)
IT'S a good time to look at your finances and think about your future, especially if you're in a relationship. You need a nest egg to feel safe. Given this need, it's wise to open an account in just your name. You can still contribute to a joint fund, but having your money own is important.
• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Virgo** 09067-531757



SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23-Dec 21)
TAKING up a creative project you left ages ago is a wonderful idea. You hate leaving things unfinished. Getting back into the habit of writing, painting, or playing music will awaken something deep inside you. You can't afford to let this side of yourself grow stale.
• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Sagittarius** 09067-531760



ARIES (Mar 21-Apr 20)
YOU can get back to your fighting weight, it's just a matter of discipline. Post an attractive photo of yourself in a prominent spot. Every time you catch sight of this image, you'll be reminded of your goal. Arrange to give yourself a small reward each time you reach a target.
• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Aries** 09067-531752



CANCER (Jun 23-Jul 23)
YOUR boss may review your job description so don't be surprised if you are presented with a whole new set of responsibilities. They might not involve much creativity or imagination. Perhaps this is a sign you need to move on to greener pastures.
• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Cancer** 09067-531755



LIBRA (Sep 24-Oct 23)
SOMEONE from the past could make a comeback into your life. Work out whether this will be good for you. After all, you've made tremendous progress since you parted company with them. You must admit, you have a tendency to put your needs aside for the sake of others.
• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Libra** 09067-531758



CAPRICORN (Dec 22-Jan 20)
GOING through photo albums and mementoes will bring back some great memories. You have the opportunity to forge the life you always deserved and desired. Get into the habit of treating yourself to things you missed out on when you were younger. Make up for lost time.
• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Capricorn** 09067-531761

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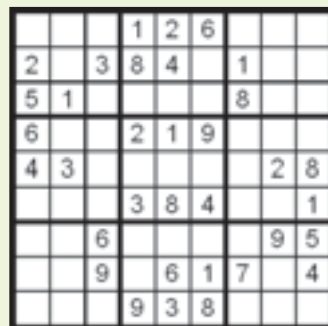
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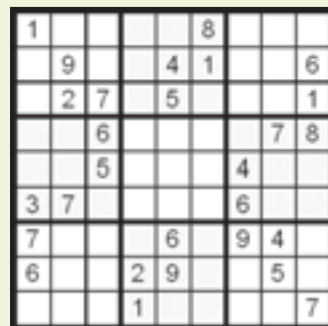
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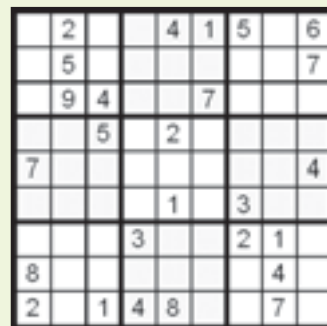
EASY



MEDIUM



HARD



CRYPTIC CLUES

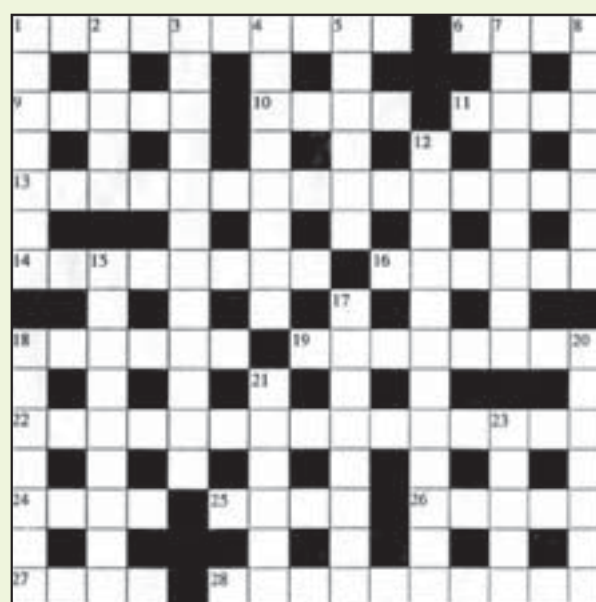
ACROSS

- 1 Two requirements for the game (10)
- 6 William's account (4)
- 9 In disuse upper part of exhaust (3,2)
- 10 This ran unsuccessfully (4)
- 11 Basil, say, had some sherbet (4)
- 13 Safely stored in gaol (5,4,3,3)
- 14 Clean below the line (8)
- 16 More correct-sounding scribe (6)
- 18 Caprice by Virginia and Gareth (6)
- 19 Invoice for earlier one, say (8)
- 22 Among the medals during preceding quarter presumably (2,3,5,5)
- 24 Girl had half a lump twice (4)
- 25 Old from the year 500! (4)
- 26 A doctor in the British Isles initially had a deer (5)
- 27 Not about, stuck, puzzled with pointed tooth (4)
- 28 Missive that's uncalled-for (4-6)

DOWN

- 1 Sent, say, for bunch of flowers (7)
- 2 Place almost fixed (5)
- 3 Where to sell things out of the country (6,6)
- 4 Born lazy, involved with heraldry (8)
- 5 UK, alas, exchanged capital! (6)
- 7 Creakiest sort of performer at the rink (3-6)
- 8 One attempting to influence the small hall hesitantly (7)
- 12 Unrewarding version of a blueprint (12)
- 15 Drug one's put underneath this computer (9)
- 17 Was chairman before team started drifting (8)
- 18 Shortly have piece inserted into small bloodvessel (7)
- 20 Retailer did not start arranging workshop (7)
- 21 Succession of clinking sounds in catchy rhyme (6)
- 23 Send timer off (5)

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QUICK CLUES

ACROSS

- 1 Long-eared American hare (4-6)
- 6 River Thames at Oxford (4)
- 9 Small medieval fiddle (5)
- 10 Warships (4)
- 11 Rotate (4)
- 13 Action that will lead to conflict (9,6)
- 14 Greenhouse (8)
- 16 In flower (6)
- 18 Outwit (6)
- 19 Quarter-circle (8)
- 22 East African antelope (8,7)
- 24 Frame of mind (4)
- 25 Poultry bird (4)
- 26 Adored (5)
- 27 County in western Ireland (4)
- 28 Castle defence (10)

DOWN

- 1 Biblical city (7)
- 2 Small party (5)
- 3 Seesawing toy (7-5)
- 4 Outlawry (8)
- 5 Originate (6)
- 7 Nervous Pa (anag.) (9)
- 8 Ray (7)
- 12 Excellent thing or person (5-7)
- 19 Collection of poems (9)
- 17 One-storey house (8)
- 18 Most favourable (7)
- 20 Altered (anag.) (7)
- 21 Done in a building (6)
- 23 Very angry (5)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

SUDOKU SOLUTIONS No76

EASY



MEDIUM



HARD



Answers to all of this week's quizzes can be found on our website

CRYPTIC SOLUTION No76

ACROSS: 1 Anjou 4 Made sure 8 Pick of the bunch 10 Off-limits 11 Egypt 12 Ayow 13 Unzipped 17 Meteoric 18 Halt 22 Skull 24 Eyestrain 25 Question-master 26 Infernal 27 Yodel. **DOWN:** 1 Amphora 2 Jack Frost 3 Utopia 4 Matrix 5 Dressing 6 Souvenir 7 Rocky 9 Stud 14 Play-acted 15 Coalesce 16 Limekiln 17 Mist 19 Tendril 20 Fennel 21 Steady 23 U-turn.

QUICK SOLUTION No77

ACROSS: 1 Jack-rabbit 6 Isle 9 Rebel 10 Bobby-dazzler 15 Anthology 17 Bungalow 18 Optimum 20 Treadle 21 Indoor 22 Laid 5 Invent 7 Supernova 8 Sunbeam 12 Jericho 2 Cabal 3 Rocking-horse 4 Banditry 10 Loved 27 Mayo 28 Drawn-bridge. **DOWN:** 1 26 Thomson's gazelle 24 Mood 25 Fowl 26 Orangery 16 Abloom 18 Outfox 19 Quadrant Navy 11 Spin 13 Collision course 14

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Escape to the coast of tranquillity

BY CHRIS BRITCHER

IT would be easy in this day and age to write Cornwall off as something of a victim of its own success.

It is, after all, hugely popular courtesy of warm Atlantic air and some dramatic, craggy coastlines.

But is has something of an image problem; of being awash with surfers hurtling around in Scooby Doo-style camper vans and its housing stock being snapped up by the second-home brigade. It has given fuel to its critics who say its magic is diluted by a torrent of newcomers.

Yet while in the summer the narrow streets winding down to picture-postcard fishing villages set amid ragged rocks and bathed by turquoise waters become a mass of hot metal as cars compete for a slice of tarmac, off-season it retains a charm which is quite unique.

And, despite its fame, it has enough nooks and crannies in which it remains possible to escape from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Take The Lugger Hotel. A weak-armed child's stone's throw from the water's edge, the 17th century inn has long been entertaining visitors. It will come as little surprise it was once a smuggler's cove – hidden as it is in a bay surrounded by steep cliffs.

It nestles at the very foot of tiny Portloe on the Roseland Peninsula in Truro, 12 miles from St Austell. Its white-washed walls gleam against the lobster pots and boats which fisherman use to land their catch just yards from the kitchen door. It feels so remote. You can't even get a mobile phone reception here; which in this day and age is praise indeed.

And it delivers a slice of style and luxury without any of the pomp and ceremony which can make some hotels almost intimidating.



Picture: CHRIS BRITCHER

RETREAT: The Lugger Hotel, right, is found at the water's edge in a beautiful, secluded, Cornish cove

Our room, in a converted boathouse a 30-second stroll from the main hotel building, was a mass of spotless creams and whites – the linen deep and rich, the décor perfect for the spectacular setting outside your window.

This is a walker's paradise. Coastal routes wind their way up the cliff sides, providing perfect views across the deep blue waters and breathtaking scenery. The town itself, however, offers little other than unspoilt charm.

Remarkably, locals estimate about 70 per cent of the pretty cottages in Portloe are second homes. An evening stroll to the Ship Inn nearby is done in almost complete darkness and silence as darkened homes line the five-minute route. It's a little eerie, and rather sad if truth be told.

The small shops which have long since closed their shutters for the final time have stopped being the heartbeat of the this pretty village. Now The Lugger fulfils that role;

expanding into nearby properties to offer a varied range of accommodation.

Strapping on your walking boots for a stroll is the ideal way in which to build up an appetite for a meal in the low-ceiling, wooden-beamed restaurant. It is truly a gourmet delight. The daily changing menu boasts fresh caught fish and seasonal vegetables that almost throb with taste and freshness.

There's even a growing range of spa treatments on offer for the guest wanting to indulge in the ultimate in relaxation. An hour being pampered amid the candles and music before taking in the clean, crisp air outside is very much the icing on the top of a quite wonderful, self-indulgent cake.

What's more, with the Eden Project just 40 minutes drive away and miles and miles of coastline to explore, Cornwall may just need to go back on the must-visit map. And The Lugger should be the must-book hotel.



Travel details

Chris Britcher was a guest of The Lugger Hotel. He stayed in a deluxe room with sea views and a daily rate of £250 for double occupancy and inclusive of breakfast, three-course dinner, and VAT. Special weekend break rates are available, as are three night midweek rates.

The Elemis range of spa treatments start at £40 and include special treatments for men and women.

For details of the hotel and full details of costs see www.luggerhotel.com or call 01872 501322.



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ABTA No. Y0291

PROPERTY NEWS

Wide-ranging market study gets under way

THE Office of Fair Trading has launched its market study into home buying and selling, following two months of discussion with interested parties on its scope.

The study will take a comprehensive look at the market for home buying and selling services. It will consider:

- Competition on price and quality between service providers, principally estate agents.
- Prospects for entry by new business models, including internet-based.
- Whether the regulatory framework provides the right balance between protecting consumers and ensuring the market remains open to competition and innovation.
- Relationships between estate agents and other service providers such as mortgage brokers, surveyors, solicitors and other professional advisors.

The study will cover the UK, while recognising the significant differences in how the market works in Scotland.

Heather Clayton, senior director of infrastructure, said: "We need to ensure consumers receive a good service when buying or selling a home, from a market that is competitive, innovative and well-functioning. We have had constructive discussions with interested parties and are starting the study with a clear understanding of the key issues."

The OFT intends to complete the study before the end of 2009. For more details, visit www.of.gov.uk/homes.

Average house price falls £28k in a year

THE average house price is now £156,753, down almost £28,000 on January 2008. This represents an annual decrease of 15.1 per cent.

In London, the average price fell 14.1 per cent annually to £306,183.

It is the 17th month in a row where the annual rate of change has fallen, in contrast with 21 months of uninterrupted increases in the average annual rate of change between December 2005 and August 2007.

The most up-to-date figures available show that during November 2008 the number of completed house sales fell by 67 per cent to 33,404 from 100,730 in November 2007.

In London only 3,504 house sales were completed in November 2008 compared with 12,719 in November 2007 – a fall of 72 per cent. For more information and to view the latest statistics, visit www.landregistry.gov.uk/houseprices/



Agents confirm growing first-time buyer activity



OPEN DOOR: Falling prices are enticing first time-buyers after years of being unable to get a foothold on the property ladder, but the banking crisis is hindering recovery

FIRST-time buyers are edging out of their shells and tentatively beginning to venture into the offices of estate agents.

They are the key to any property recovery. If first-time buyers are not buying, chains simply can't develop, let alone be completed.

But now the National Association of Estate Agents is reporting many of its members are seeing more first timers.

All that needs to happen now is for the banks to lose their Scrooge image.

Prime Minister Gordon Brown has said he wants to see the end of 100 per cent mortgages, which will make life even harder for first-time buyers, who will have to show their deposit funds have not been borrowed and are pure savings.

Mr Brown has also been told stamp duty should be scrapped for all but the most expen-

BY CHRIS MURPHY

sive properties to ease the burden on new buyers.

And Northern Rock, virtually nationalised this time last year, has announced it will be lending up to £14 billion over the next two year – more welcome news for the market in general.

Peter Bolton King, chief executive of the estate agents' association, said: "Our figures show there is huge demand for property from first-time buyers, who are increasingly visiting estate agents, registering their interest and searching for property."

"These figures demonstrate they are being frustrated at the final hurdle because lenders are not making mortgages available."

"First-time buyers are crucial, not only to the housing market, but the entire economy. More must be done to help them."

And John Oakley, the chairman of the association's east Kent branch, said he too was seeing the start of some sort of recovery.

He said: "Locally there is a marked increase in first-time buyers registering with our member firms."

"With the reduction in house prices, they perceive now is a good time to get on the housing ladder."

"Houses are now affordable, but first-time buyers are being frustrated by the difficulties in getting a mortgage, with lenders looking for ever larger deposits."

"If the first-time buyers are not helped and encouraged to take that first step, the rest of the market cannot get moving. Banks and building societies must stop putting obstacles in the way and start to release funds."

"The housing market is one of the main drivers of the economy and when houses start selling it has a positive knock-on effect to many other sections of the community."

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Willesborough £335,000

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Chartfields £279,995

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Park Farm £249,995

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Willesborough OIEO £205,000

Three bedroom detached chalet bungalow, utility room, garage to rear, study.

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Ashford £217,000

Three bedroom detached house, close to town centre, double glazing, garage.

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Ashford OIEO £179,995

Three bedroom detached house. No chain. Ample parking. Cul-de-sac location

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Willesborough £175,000

3 bedroom detached house in South Willesborough location, garage, driveway.

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Willesborough £169,995

Three bedroom semi detached house, garage, conservatory/utility, no chain.

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Willesborough OIEO £165,000

Three bedroom link detached house, conservatory, cloakroom, no chain.

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Kingsnorth OIEO £160,000

Three bedroom end of terrace. ORP. Two garages. Countryside views.

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Ashford OIEO £155,000

Three bedroom terrace house. Cellar room. Off road parking. Town centre location.

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Willesborough £149,995

Three bedroom, two reception rooms, garage, upstairs bathroom.

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Ashford £144,995

3 bed terrace. No chain. Dble glazing and central heating. Lovely condition

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Willesborough £142,000

Cul de sac on Highfield, 2 double bedrooms, semi detached house, no chain.

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Willesborough OIEO £140,000

Three Bedroom Victorian House, Off Road Parking 100' garden approximately

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Park Farm OIEO £130,000

2 bedroom end of terrace. GF cloakroom. No chain. Driveway. Rear Garden.

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Ashford OIEO £124,995

Three bedroom end of terrace. Two reception rooms. Well presented.

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Willesborough £112,500

2 bedroom GF flat. Allocated parking. Popular location. Ideal first time purchase.

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Ashford OIEO £110,000

2 bed top floor flat. New fitted kitchen and carpets. Close to town centre.

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Town Centre OIEO £109,995

2 bedroom 1st floor flat. Modern kitchen with appliances. Central location.

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Stanhope OIEO £105,000

Three bedroom house. Kitchen diner. Good size bedrooms. Parking.

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Charing £80,000

Two bedroom park home. Two en-suites. Ideal for retirement.

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ASHFORD £109,995

Three bedroom end of terrace house with no onward chain. Entrance hall, lounge, kitchen/diner, bathroom, rear garden approx 40ft.

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WILLESBOROUGH £115,000

Two bedroom terrace house with access to local shops and motorway. Open-plan lounge/dining room, kitchen and bathroom to the first floor.

Ashford Office 01233 624561



ASHFORD OIEO £118,000

Four bedroom end of terrace house. Lounge, kitchen/diner, ground floor cloakroom, family bathroom. No onward chain.

Ashford Office 01233 624561



WILLESBOROUGH £129,950

Two bedroom end of terrace house. Off road parking, lounge, kitchen and garden. No onward chain.

Ashford Office 01233 624561



WILLESBOROUGH £130,000

Three bedroom end of terrace with loft room, entrance hall, open plan lounge/diner, dining room, kitchen, bathroom, garden, off road parking, central heating, and double glazing.

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ASHFORD £139,950

Three bedroom terrace house. Lounge/diner, kitchen, family bathroom, rear garden, front garden in excess of 40ft. No Chain.

Ashford Office 01233 624561



ASHFORD OIEO £140,000

Three bedroom end of terrace. Two reception rooms, kitchen, cloakroom, bathroom, off road parking and 22ft garage.

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WILLESBOROUGH £149,950

"NO CHAIN" Three bedroom period end of terrace property with loft room. Lounge/diner, kitchen, downstairs bathroom, and 150' rear garden.

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ASHFORD £157,500

Two bedroom end of terrace house situated on large plot next to open fields. GF cloakroom, kitchen, lounge/diner, family bathroom. Garage & driveway parking for 3 cars.

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WYE £165,000

Two bedroom semi detached house in village location with no onward chain. Entrance hall, two reception rooms, modern fitted kitchen, family bathroom. Garden measuring 50ft.

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WILLESBOROUGH £175,000

Three bedroom semi detached house. Two reception rooms, cloakroom, conservatory, kitchen, family bathroom, 100ft rear garden.

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WYE £175,000

Recently built modern three bedroom terrace house. Cloakroom, lounge/diner, kitchen & family bathroom. Allocated parking and enclosed rear garden with fencing and side access.

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WILLESBOROUGH £199,995

Two bedroom detached bungalow near to local hospital. Lounge/diner, kitchen, bathroom, rear garden, garage.

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ASHFORD OIEO £210,000

Detached house with ground floor wc, lounge, dining room, kitchen & UPVC conservatory. 3 bedrooms, master en suite shower room & bathroom. GCH, DG, driveway, garage & garden.

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ASHFORD £210,000

Four bedroom semi detached Victorian property. Entrance hallway, lounge, dining room, kitchen/breakfast room, three bedrooms, shower room and to the second floor, bedroom four.

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ASHFORD £245,000

Five bedroom terrace house with basement room. Two reception rooms, master with en suite. Near to town centre and station. Rear garden and allocated parking.

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ASHFORD OIRO £250,000

Four bedroom detached period house in rural location. Two reception rooms, kitchen/breakfast room, utility room, ground floor shower room, first floor bathroom. Double garage and driveway.

Ashford Office 01233 624561



WILLESBOROUGH OIRO £299,995

No chain period detached house. Study, lounge/diner, kitchen/breakfast room, conservatory, downstairs W/C, basement room, four bedrooms, master with en suite, family bathroom.

Ashford Office 01233 624561



BROOK OIEO £325,000

Detached bungalow, porch, entrance hall, lounge, dining room, kitchen/breakfast room, conservatory, two bedrooms, bathroom. To the first floor, two further bedrooms & bathroom.

Ashford Office 01233 624561



CHALLOCK OIEO £325,000

Five bedroom property in a cul de sac location. Cloakroom, kitchen/breakfast room, brick-built conservatory, study, lounge, en suite and dressing room to master and family bathroom.

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WILLESBOROUGH £350,000

Five bedroom detached house. Main bedroom with en-suite bathroom & dressing room, en-suite to bedroom two, family bathroom, sitting room, study, cloakroom, kitchen/breakfast room.

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KENNINGTON OIEO £375,000

Four bedroom detached split-level bungalow. Ball Lane area. Two receptions, kitchen, bathroom and en suite. Garage and driveway parking for several vehicles.

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WOODCHURCH OIEO £400,000

Four bedroom detached with entrance hall, lounge, dining room, kitchen, utility room, breakfast room, en suite to master and family bathroom, garage, heating & double glazing.

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PLUCKLEY £525,000

Entrance hall, lounge, dining room, three bedrooms with one en suite, family bathroom & modern fitted kitchen. Planning permission for a double extension. Stables and paddocks.

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Your Move are offering this detached executive style home situated in the popular village of Ruckinge. Ashwell Lodge is set in approximately two acres of land and has extensive accommodation comprising of four bedrooms and three reception rooms to the main dwelling and a separate one bedroom self contained annexe. Additionally the property includes three outbuildings. The property is a must to view to appreciate the accommodation on offer.



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• Kitchen/Dining Room • Living Room

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PUBLIC NOTICE



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We are acting for the mortgagee in possession and have received an offer of £103,500 on the above property. Any interested parties must submit any higher offers in writing to the selling agent before an exchange of contracts takes place.

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Three bedroom end of terrace house. Lounge/dining room, kitchen, utility room, bathroom, parking, garden.

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Entrance hall, cloakroom, kitchen, lounge/diner, conservatory, three bedrooms, bathroom. Garage en-bloc.

Charing Heath



£189,995

Three bedroom semi detached house in village location, Lounge/diner, kitchen, bathroom, parking, garage.

Kennington



£189,995

Lounge/diner, dining room, utility room, shower room, kitchen, 5 bedrooms, bathroom. Garage, parking.

Wye



£199,995

Three bedroom terrace house in village location. Lounge, kitchen, cellar, bathroom. Bedrooms set over 2 floors.

Singleton



£219,995

Four bedroom detached house, cloakroom, two reception rooms, kitchen, conservatory, shower room, bathroom.

Singleton



OIEO £230,000

4 bedroom home. WC, two reception rooms, conservatory, kitchen/breakfast room, utility room, master en suite.

Shadoxhurst



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3 bedroom bungalow. Generous corner plot, offers potential for further development subject to usual planning consents.

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A three bedroom end terrace property, double glazing, gas radiator heating, kitchen diner, separate lounge.



WILLESBOROUGH £159,950

A three bedroom end terrace property, cul de sac location, double aspect kitchen / diner, double aspect lounge, ground floor WC, gas fired central heating, double glazing.



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SHADOXHURST £229,950

A three bedroom detached bungalow, village location, substantial plot size, double glazing, oil fired central heating, conservatory, driveway parking, garage.



SINGLETON £142,500

A two bedroom purpose built bungalow, warden assisted, double glazing, economy 7 heating, parking.



FAIRVIEW DRIVE £174,999

A four/five bedroom town house, ground floor WC, kitchen/diner, family bathroom, separate shower room, en-suite shower room to master bedroom, garage, no chain.



ASHFORD £235,000

A unique four bedroom detached property, situated in a non-estate location, en-suite shower room, utility room, 26' sitting room, double glazing, NHBC remaining.

MOTORS NEWS



New car gives Insight into a hybrid future

HONDA opens a new front in the hybrid war in April with the all-new Insight, billed as a Ford Focus class hybrid at a conventional price.

The Insight (from £15,490) undercuts the rival Toyota Prius significantly and attacks up-spec or 'eco' versions of the Ford Focus and VW Golf.

Honda says experience has shown where savings can be cut yet the car is generously equipped, qualifies for the lowest company car Benefit in Kind bracket and caters for buyers' desire to 'go green'.



Mitsi's Ralliart 'pocket rocket' all ready to fly

MITSUBISHI has had another crack at creating a cut-price 'pocket rocket' – a hot hatch version of its heavily revamped Colt supermini.

The new Ralliart (from £12,049) features the 'Jet Fighter' nose from the new Mitsubishi Lancer and is also available as a five-door (£12,549) as well as a three.

But it is on the road where advantages show over the old model; the 147bhp 1.5-litre turbocharged Ralliart's revised chassis and steering is far superior.

It just needs more 'hot hatch' branding.



Seat's 'back to black' offer is pretty special

COLOUR always plays a big part in marketing for Seat.

Having made red, yellow and white popular again for performance models, the Spanish marque is championing black with the Ibiza Black special based on the five-door 1.4 Sport variant, including air con and electric windows all round.

Extras include unique front and rear bumpers, side skirts, tailgate roof spoiler, and black metallic paint – all for £12,345 and featuring a lively 83bhp 1.4-litre petrol engine with five-speed manual gearbox.



ZOOM-ZOOM IMAGE: The latest Mazda2 has learned an important lesson from its Mark I predecessor by staying away from MPV styling and being sleeker and more aerodynamic

Mazda2 Mark II standing out from supermini crowd

THERE'S not much scope for grand styling within the compact dimensions of a supermini.

So the latest Mazda2 makes a refreshing change, but the Japanese marque learned the hard way how supermini buyers crave style as well as practicality; the original Mazda2 drove well enough, but erred too much towards MPV styling to be a big seller.

The current low slung, lightweight and aerodynamic three/five-door '2' (from £8,899) better suits the brand's 'Zoom-Zoom' image.

Slinky lines are not let down by the drive either; a slick gearbox and lively engines mated with a neat and tidy chassis, balancing good grip and steering with a decent ride, makes the '2' one of those rare cars that you can enjoy without a masses of power.

This bodes well for an almost obligatory hot model later on to wear the wide stripes with which you can already customise your Mazda2.

And it underlines the appeal of even our £9,399 TS five-door entry model. In its lower (74bhp) state of tune the 1.3 petrol engine is still lively but, having driven all but the 1.4 diesel engine, I would urge you to go for the

ROAD TEST MAZDA2

BY STEVE LOADER

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Green rating	★★★★★

extra power of the 85bhp TS2 model without going the whole way to the 102bhp 1.5-litre petrol Sport (£11,799).

The 1.5 is lively alright, but does not bring much more to the party in return for costing £2,000 more than our favourite.

One thing all versions have in common though is their eco-friendliness – the Mazda2 is much lighter than its predecessor and most rivals, which means lower emissions and better fuel consumption.

The Mazda is well-equipped as standard: electric front windows, driver seat height adjustment, MP3 compatible CD radio with auxiliary jack and electric door mirrors.

The interior is also spacious and airy due to a relatively long wheelbase and low window line, while the dashboard is smart and well-arranged, with the high-mounted gearshift falling nicely to hand for a sporty drive.

The seats are comfortable for this class too, though Mazda has cut some corners with the quality and feel of cabin materials, while extra interior space, comfort and style may have been bought at the expense of the boot, 250 litres being shy of the 285-ish benchmark set by top-selling rivals.



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USED CAR ROUND-UP: OUR PICK FROM A KEY SECTOR

FRENCH FAMILY HATCHBACKS

IN a market sector where products are increasingly alike, French motor manufacturers tend to create highly individual rivals to the big-selling Ford Focus. Where Gallic contenders do harmonise is with chic and distinctive interiors, good turbodiesel engine options and ride comfort – a response to rural tracks and the cobbled streets that still criss-cross many city centres in France. This is not to everyone's taste though, so our trio can be very affordable too in a used car market that saw prices tumble drastically in late 2008.

carsforkent.co.uk

RENAULT MEGANE



RENAULT'S second generation Mégane arrived in late 2002 and proclaimed that, unlike its predecessor, it would look and stay fresh for the full production run – it still looks good against its recent successor. The now famous rear end 'bustle' made the car stand out and buyers flocked to Renault's mid-range model despite the feature costing load space. Apart from a sassy image it offers good diesels, safety, low running costs and scorching Renaultsport versions (pictured).

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★

CITROEN C4



LIKE Renault, Citroën really needed to pull something special from the hat for its current family hatch. As a result, the C4 is a far better car than the horribly Xsara that it replaced and Citroën has given the five and three-door models a different look each; the former is sleek, futuristic and stylish while the latter has rakish coupé lines. However, both ride beautifully and share a radical and interesting interior without the irritating quirkiness of old-style Citroëns.

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★

PEUGEOT 307



PEUGEOT used to trump its French rivals in this sector, but faces tougher players now. The 307, launched in 2001 and replaced in 2007, saw Peugeot acknowledge the trend towards MPV styling, opting for a high roofline, while still offering a conventional estate and MPV-like SW alternative (pictured). Along with the original three and five-door hatchbacks and a coupé cabriolet, the 307 has all the bases covered, a fine choice of turbodiesels and cheaper used prices.

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★



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	04 54 Vauxhall Astra 1.7 CDTi 16v SRi (100) 5dr Parker's Price £6,395 Save £396* Our Price £5,999

	07 07 Peugeot 307 CC 2.0 S 2dr Parker's Price £9,255 Save £1,256* Our Price £7,999
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Senior & General Appointments 40-42



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Applications with full CV to be sent to Mrs. S. Barlow, HR Manager, GSE Group, Joshna House, Crowbridge Road, Ashford, Kent TN24 0GR or sue.barlow@gse-group.com.

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Or call 01304 843011 for an Application Form.

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Completed applications by: 5 March 2009.

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For an informal chat call David Ambrose on 01223 667705.

Completed applications by: 12 March 2009.

Senior Physiotherapy Assistant (*) ()

Band 4: £17,316 - £20,818 per annum pro rata **Ref: 767-EKB894**
Swale Local Office, Sittingbourne
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Duties will include a wide range of tasks including planned preventative maintenance, unplanned repairs and new installations. You will work with a small team of colleagues on a continental shift pattern (2x12 hr days, 2 x 12 hr nights, 4 off). The following qualifications and experience are appropriate, but alternatives may be acceptable. Apprenticeship served, City & Guilds in Mechanical Engineering, some electrical knowledge and experience advantageous but not essential.

You'll enjoy a full range of employee benefits. To apply please send your CV to HR Department, Fuji Seal Europe Ltd, Scimitar Close, Gillingham Business Park, Gillingham, Kent ME8 0RJ or alternatively you can email to jobs@uk.fujiiseal.com.

Previous applicants need not apply.

Closing date: 9 March 2009

Strictly no agencies.

Fuji Seal Europe are an equal opportunities employer.

Primary Care based Psychological Therapists

£21,244 – £27,492

PART TIME WORK AVAILABLE (MINIMUM 18.5 HOURS)

BASED ASHFORD

Locum and Bank Psychological Therapists

LOCALITIES ACROSS KENT

KCA provides a wide range of high quality, innovative primary care mental health services. We currently require additional experienced psychological therapists to work with adult clients in our well established service providing short term therapy within GP practices.

For Ashford based roles, the number of sessions and available working days will be negotiated to meet the requirements of the service.

We are also looking for therapists to join our locum/bank list for short term therapeutic work across Kent.

We provide a strong departmental framework with regular clinical supervision, line management, monthly team meetings, effective administration, and opportunities for further training and career development.

Applicants will be required to be qualified to a minimum of Diploma level. A knowledge of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy is highly desirable and you should be eligible for BACP accreditation and/or UKCP registration. Providing focused, short term interventions, you're equally at home working independently or as part of a team.

For an informal discussion of the above posts please contact David Hayter, Operations Manager, KCA Psychological Therapy Providers on 01795 590635.

Application forms and job descriptions can be downloaded from <http://www.kca.org.uk/pages/vacancies.html> or email recruitment@kca.org.uk Alternatively, write to KCA (UK), Dan House, 44 East Street, Faversham, Kent ME13 8AT or call 01795 590635. Please quote reference 552.

Closing date: Monday 9 March 2009.

Interview date: TBA.

KCA (UK) is committed to the principles of equality of opportunity for all. Charity no: 292824

www.kca.org.uk

**Assessors (Variable Hours)**

Ref: S2167

Folkestone/Ashford/Dover

Closing date: 06/03/09

With campuses in Ashford, Folkestone and Dover, South Kent College offers a wide range of courses from Entry Level to Level 7 and caters for over 10,000 students of all ages. We are currently recruiting for Assessors in all vocational areas including Catering, Construction, Motor Vehicle, Engineering, Business Administration and Customer Care.

Main duties include assessing workplace students up to NVQ Level 3 and Key Skills Level 2, supporting and guiding candidates in portfolio building, 'on' and 'off-the-job' training for Work Based Training programmes, and acting as a mentor to students. You will hold a minimum of NVQ Level 3 or equivalent in your relevant specialism, and the A1 Assessor Award or equivalent (formally D32/33) as well as having a minimum of three years recent and relevant experience in your field.

For further information please contact the Human Resources Department on 0845 207 8222 (24 hour answerphone), email: humanresources@southkent.ac.uk or visit www.southkent.ac.uk. Please submit a CV in the first instance, with a covering letter detailing which specialism you are interested in applying for.

All posts are subject to a disclosure check by the Criminal Records Bureau. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all employees to share this commitment. Applications are welcome from suitably qualified candidates regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexuality or religion.



South Kent College
ASHFORD • DOVER • FOLKESTONE

Community Drug Workers

£21,244 – £27,492 + ESSENTIAL CAR USER ALLOWANCE UP TO £1,095

EAST/WEST KENT AND MEDWAY

KCA (UK) is an expanding and vibrant organisation providing a wide range of high quality and innovative specialist services in the drug, alcohol and mental health sectors.

Could you help chaotic injecting drug users to stabilise their use and begin shaping better lifestyles? It is a big challenge that will see you work closely with medical staff as you deliver assessment and key worker support to people accessing the substitute prescribing service.

Significant experience of working with individuals with drug related problems is desirable, along with a qualification to diploma level in a relevant area – nursing, counselling or social work for example. As for your future, there is the opportunity to make a huge impact on people's lives and help grow our services into the future working as part of a multi-disciplinary team.

For further information and an application form email recruitment@kca.org.uk or write to KCA (UK), Dan House, 44 East Street, Faversham, Kent ME13 8AT. Alternatively, call 01795 590635. Please quote ref: 553

Closing date: 13 March 2009.

Interview date: 1 April 2009.

KCA (UK) is committed to the principles of equality of opportunity for all and welcomes applications from people with experience of substance use or who have had previous problems with substance misuse. Charity no: 292824.

www.kca.org.uk

**Deal Town Council**

Town Hall, High Street, Deal, Kent CT14 6BB Tel No: 01304 361999

TWO VACANCIES

Deputy Premises Officer

20 hours per week worked flexibly. Salary £6.53 per hour

To appoint a Deputy Premises Officer to assist in an expanding area of work within the council. Embracing, booking and invoicing plus subsequent attendance at events, along with caretaking and the overseeing of the council's allotments. The post holder will need to be flexible as much of the work takes place in the evenings and at weekends. The successful candidate needs to be physically fit and should ideally have some relevant experience as well as being conversant with Microsoft IT packages. The council seeks to be a quality employer but parts of the Town Hall are difficult to access for the disabled.

Closing date for applications:

12 noon Friday 20 March 2009 – Interviews will be on the morning of Friday 27 March 2009

Deal Saturday Market Officer

Part Time post – 10 hours per week. Salary £7.34 per hour

(This involves unsocial hour working)

To appoint a Market Officer who will oversee an increasingly busy market and has to work mostly on their own initiative to agreed protocols. A flexible approach to working hours is needed as well as a patient attitude to stallholders and public. Apart from the actual market day, during the week the duties require the officer to be available via a mobile phone to deal with enquiries and stallholder bookings. Record keeping is an important part of the duties. The post holder will need to be physically fit and ideally conversant with Microsoft IT packages.

Closing date for applications:

12 noon Friday 27 March 2009 – Interviews will be on Friday 3 April 2009

For an application pack contact:

Deal Town Council, Deal Town Hall, High Street, Deal, Kent CT14 6BB
Tel: 01304 361999 or Email: dealtowncouncil@deal.gov.uk

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circa £13 750 pa

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Further details may be requested from Stuart Harris, Estates Bursar: telephone 01622 845254 or e-mail: harrisst@svs.org.uk

Closing date for applications: 16th March, 2009.



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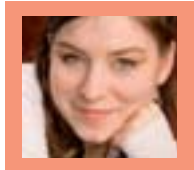
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WOMEN seeking men

TAKE ME FOR WHO I AM

Hi I'm Sam, 22, looking for a relationship. I'm blonde, have brown eyes, love cosy nights in and cinema, looking to share a relationship. Box 447871 **📧**

BLONDE BABE LIKES FOOTIE!

Fun-to-be-with, blonde female, 25, 5ft2, a woman who loves football! Enjoys going out and staying in, looking for a like-minded man, to be her soulmate. Box 446494 **📧**

GETTING TO KNOW YOU...

Sociable girl, 28, loves pubs, social drinks, meeting new people & more, seeks similar male, 58-62, for a lasting relationship. Box 448756 **📧**

BRING ME SUNSHINE

Outgoing, fun female 28, seeks outgoing, fun guy to make me laugh and share the good times with. Box 882511 **📧**

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GIVE AND TAKE IN LOVE

Loving loyal female, 30, blue eyes, brown hair, seeking LTR with male 30-35, 6ft+, no baggage, in the Maidstone area. Box 448471 **📧**

GET A STRIKE

African, single mum, caring, adventurous, generous, 30yrs old, medium build. I love cinema/LTR with male, bowling, shopping, cosy nights in. Box 882789 **📧**

LTR WANTED

Easysgoing black female, 32, medium build, likes football, cooking and socialising, looking for a non-smoking, loving and caring white male, 25-48, Eastbourne. Box 448294 **📧**

NO TIMEWASTERS!

Easysgoing female, 32, enjoys shopping, football, eating out, cosy night in, WLTW loving, caring white male 35-47 for long term loving relationship. Box 444214 **📧**

AND THE SPARKS WILL FLY

Bubbly lively lady, 5'7", outgoing, 33, honest, reliable, looking for someone to get to know and see what happens. Sittingbourne. Box 449585 **📧**

HORSES FOR COURSES...

Caring, loving, affectionate female, 30, 5'2", blonde, likes walking, horse riding, animals, seeks affectionate male, 30-40, for lasting, loving relationship. Box 384013 **📧**

CHATHAM UP!

Pretty black female, 32, tall, loves watching football, shopping, travel, seeking tall, white, loving male, 34-47, for LTR. Chatham. Box 437778 **📧**

FUN-LOVING FEMALE

Attractive, 31, 5'4", size 12, dark hair with blonde highlights, tactile, WLTW intelligent, professional, attractive guy, for a happy relationship. Tunbridge Wells. Box 308734 **📧**

A NEW FUTURE!

I'm Rachel, 35, medium, enjoys pubs, clubs, cosy nights in, cinema, theme parks, looking someone special to share things with. Box 448591 **📧**

SOUND GOOD?

Hello I'm 35, kind, caring and non-smoking, enjoy cooking, cinema, music, dining in and out, looking for that special someone to enjoy a relationship with. Box 447595 **📧**

ON A ROLL!

Hi, I'm Alison, 36, 5ft5, single mum, loves swimming, roller skating and meeting new people, looking for a male for friendship, maybe leading to more. Box 448865 **📧**

CLOSE ENCOUNTER

Loving, caring, tactile female, 36, 5'8", blonde hair, blue eyes, N/S, GSOH, likes cinema, bowling, country pubs, nights in/out, seeks male for friendship and LTR. Box 827619 **📧**

LOVE TO LOVE YOU

Lovely female, 36, 5ft4, medium-large build, blonde hair, blue eyes, own house, loves walking, going out, the usual! Seeking male for long-term, serious relationship. Box 438102 **📧**

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

Good looking woman, 37, 5ft2, brown hair/eyes, 2 kids. Looking for new friends, and hopefully someone special. Box 446039 **📧**

TRY ME

Ashford-based woman looking for an honest, friendly, caring, and loving man. I have 2 kids, and enjoy the usual things in life. Box 446965 **📧**

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YOUNG-AT-HEART

Attractive 39yr old female, dark brown hair, blue eyes, curvy, likes days out, music, concerts, cinema, walks, cycling, seeks loving, fun male, for friendship, relationship. Box 901893 **📧**

EYES ON YOU

Hi I'm Jenny, 40, love reading/writing, going out, astrology, cars; seeking honest, caring, outgoing guy to enjoy music, fun, friendship and more. Box 449181 **📧**

THE SIMPLE THINGS...

I like reading/writing, going out, music. Seeking kind, genuine, honest chap; I'm a 40yr old woman who enjoys the simple things in life. Box 448542 **📧**



A NICE BOTTLE OF WINE

Lovely, glossy brunette, 39yr old, petite, bubbly and loving, enjoys theatre, music and eating out, WLTW a professional, loving and tactile male for a relationship. Box 442551 **📧**

NO TIES

Lonely, bored, professional Tunbridge Wells Asian lady, 40, WLTW slim, single, solvent, professional white male 40-50 for company, fun, love and laughter. Box 443573 **📧**

ANIMAL LOVER

Tall, slimish woman, I like horse riding, animals, cycling, country walks with the dogs, nights in/out. I'm 42, with brown hair/eyes. Box 448924 **📧**

TOGETHER?

Slim lady, 42, 5ft9, long dark hair, loves walking her dogs, enjoys out-doors, seeks gentleman to spend time with and get to know. Box 448681 **📧**

ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE

Hello, I'm Nikki, 41yr young, 5ft1, enjoys dining out, cinema and dancing, seeking a male for friendship, possible romance and fun times. Box 444796 **📧**

AIMING HIGH

6ft blonde aerobics instructor, female, 43, seeking decent, tall, fit male for companionship, hopefully leading to a relationship in my spare time (mainly afternoons). Box 446017 **📧**

GOOD TIME GIRL

Outgoing young lady, 43, blonde hair blue eyes, 5ft4, works hard, loves socialising, partying, meeting new people...looking for similar male to enjoy happy times with. Box 449157 **📧**

SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE MOVIES!

Single mum, 43, kind and devoted, likes walks, cinema, beaches and socialising, drinks and films, seeks similar man for lasting love. Box 449686 **📧**

COUNTRY LASS

Country-loving happy lady, 43, 5ft6, green eyes, long curly hair, good figure, looking for a genuine guy for a serious relationship and lasting happiness. Battle. Box 883723 **📧**



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THIS STATE OF INDEPENDENCE

Honest, bubbly female, 41, 5'4", bubbly, independent woman, love to laugh, socialising with friends, looking for independent man who values TLC. Box 414156 **📧**

BE WITH ME

Honest and caring female, 44yrs old, enjoys pubs, cinema, theatre and more, seeks a kind, caring gentleman for friendship & romance. Box 882419 **📧**

GENUINE REPLIES ONLY

Bubbly female, 44, brunette, N/S, medium/large, enjoys singing and theatre. Would love to meet a decent fun-loving guy, similar age, pref non-smoker for LTR. Box 445955 **📧**

COME ON DOWN!

Honest, bubbly female 45, long hair, slim, enjoys walking, cinema, socialising; seeks honest, friendly chap for friendship/more. Box 882693 **📧**

COULD IT BE YOU?

Hi I'm 44, slim, 5ft8, a redhead, love nights out, socialising, looking for friendship initially and hopefully more later on. Box 889800 **📧**

HI EVERYONE, I'M

Debbie, 46, slim, 5ft5, blonde hair, blue eyes, looking for a man, 44-49, 5ft7+, with a nice appearance, preferably a N/S. Box 449422 **📧**

SOUND GOOD?

Hi I'm Lynne 46, 5ft4, dark hair/eyes, love reading/writing, going out, astrology, cars; seeking honest, caring, outgoing guy to enjoy music, fun, friendship and more! Box 449186 **📧**

BE MY FRIEND AND LOVER

Bubbly, caring lady, 47, divorced with 2 teenagers, dark hair, medium build, into cooking, driving, love to talk, laugh and have fun, seeking a normal guy. Box 442952 **📧**

ENTERTAIN ME

Female, 50, medium build, blonde, quite short, seeking tall, confident, sensual guy for regular wining, dining, loving and laughter, must be honest, genuine and loving. Box 438854 **📧**

JUST IMAGINE

Petite, brunette, bubbly, friendly, easy-going single mum, 49, enjoys cinema, eating out, socialising, most things, WLTW genuine male, to see where life takes us! Box 893562 **📧**

BE MY GUY

Young 50s lady, slim, 5ft4, fair hair, a smoker, loves music, going out, cooking, gardening, seeking similar loving, caring, honest male. Box 449288 **📧**

HERE AND NOW

Outgoing lady, 50, enjoys walks along the beach, nights out and in with a quiet bottle of wine, seeks man to love forever. Box 449524 **📧**

FOR KEEPS

Hi I'm Karen, 50, medium build, 5ft, separated, devoted mum, looking for friendship with someone who likes dining out, evening walks, and perhaps something lasting... Box 882618 **📧**

CARING & PROFESSIONAL

Female 49, 5ft4, long hair, slim, likes eating out, the beach, travel, seeks a friendly chap, 48-55, Hastings Box 417100 **📧**

YOU DON'T KNOW UNTIL YOU CALL...

Young looking, hard working 53yr old living in East Sussex. I am a happy, caring person with a good sense of humour. Non-smoker. Heathfield. Box 883410 **📧**

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You can choose to text the member's 6-digit box number followed by a space, then your message (max of 160 characters) and send to **82250** e.g. 654321 Hi my name is... Standard network rates apply to send messages. Successfully forwarded messages cost £1.50 per message.

COMPANIONSHIP, LAUGHTER, HOPEFULLY MORE

Curvy & cuddly, outgoing, friendly, honest female, 53, 5ft7, larger build, fair hair, likes socialising, country walks, theatre, cinema, music, swimming, WLTW similar loving male. Box 443642 **📧**

A COMPANION FOR LIFE?

Blonde lady, 56, 5ft5, medium build, attractive, devoted mum, ready to start dating again and seeking male who loves travel, theatre, walks, cinema and more. Box 448449 **📧**

LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS!

Smart petite lady, 56, 5ft4, tall, blonde hair, green eyes, likes restaurants, theatre, cinema, travel abroad; seeking happy guy with similar interests. Box 448795 **📧**

HOLDING OUT FOR A HERO

Londoner new to the area, 57, 5ft5, slim attractive blonde, seeking a man for serious relationship and lasting happiness. Box 449587 **📧**

DREAMS OF YOU

Genuine, caring lady, late 50s, slim & young looking, looking for a loyal, considerate, N/S male for long term relationship. Box 446566 **📧**

WALKS ALONG THE COAST

Honest & sincere female, 58, tall, GSOH, loves country pubs, coasts, cinema, seeking a man who's a match for me with GSOH for relationship. Box 441622 **📧**

HAPPY AS ME

Fun-to-be with, happy, contented lady (60), 5ft4, I enjoy theatre, dining out and having friends round for a meal, gardening and pets. Box 882812 **📧**

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LOVING AND GENUINE

Female, early 60s, tall, slim, modern, young thinking & very adaptable to people, own house, loves animals, walking & eating out. Hastings. Box 440502 **📧**

Women seeking women

IT'S WHAT'S INSIDE THAT COUNTS
I'm a 26yr old female, looking for new friends, maybe that special girl...let's have a meal and a drink and see what happens! Box 448722 **📧**

LOVE TO LOVE

Easysgoing female, 40, blue eyes, blonde hair, medium build, likes wining, dining, socialising, holidays, walks cinema; seeking likewise female for companionship and more. Box 446953 **📧**

FRIENDSHIP, HOPEFULLY MORE

Feminine woman, easysgoing, caring, 45, long brown hair, blue eyes, I love music, eating out, reading/writing, drives, weekends away. WLTW boyish female. Box 448248 **📧**

THE WIND BENEATH YOUR WINGS

Guy of 40, outgoing, fun, tall, told I'm handsome, easysgoing, looking to meet a nice, attractive lady to sweep off her feet. Box 883676 **📧**

MAKE IT A LOVELY DAY

Hi, I'm Carl, 40, GSOH, 6ft, light green eyes, brown hair, looking for a fun, bubbly woman to share laughs, days out and much more. Box 436696 **📧**

STANDING ON OUR OWN FEET

Hi there, I'm a 42 year old male, 6ft, with brown hair/blue eyes, sincere, caring & thoughtful, OHAC, seeking female with independent mind for love. Box 884870 **📧**

TO LOVE SOMEBODY

Loving, tactile, genuine, considerate male, 42, life of the party, loves swimming, music, cinema, reading, WLTW the girl to spend great times with... Box 449450 **📧**

GET BACK

Gentle male, 42, brown eyes, medium build, works hard, own place, seeking similar female, own place, hassles/ies, to enjoy cinema, conversation, eating out and more. Box 444952 **📧**

THE PERFECT RELATIONSHIP?

Dad with that SOH, 29, 6ft, dark hair blue eyes, slim, loves music, cars, bikes and socialising, looking for girl for fun and more. Box 449334 **📧**

MEN seeking women

FOR LOVE

Hard-working male, 29, 5ft10, dark hair, brown eyes, medium build, plays harder! Likes going/eating out, walks, pubs, loves life, seeking similar happy, trustworthy lady. Box 442752 **📧**

WORD FOR WORD

Honest, caring male, 35, 5ft11, short dark blond hair, blue eyes, med build, seeking loving, loyal, honest black female for fun, friendship and hopefully LTR. Box 448581 **📧**

FOR LOVE

Hard-working male, 29, 5ft10, dark hair, brown eyes, medium build, plays harder! Likes going/eating out, walks, pubs, loves life, seeking similar happy, trustworthy lady. Box 442752 **📧**

WORD FOR WORD

Honest, caring male, 35, 5ft11, short dark blond hair, blue eyes, med build, seeking loving, loyal, honest black female for fun, friendship and hopefully LTR. Box 448581 **📧**

A DEVOTED DAD SPEAKS

Young guy who enjoys life, 36, likes wining/dining, music, movies and nights in, looking for someone to share my life with, hopefully more. Box 449502 **📧**

NICE TO MEET YOU

Genuine single guy, 37, worked hard all my life now needs to play hard, seeking loving lady, to have loads of fun and more with. Box 449538 **📧**

MAKE ME SMILE AGAIN

Seeking genuine lady, I'm a 38yr old male, 5ft8, dark hair/blue eyes. I work hard and play hard, would like to enjoy spare time with partner. Box 449649 **📧**

HOP ON!

Hi, I'm Mark, 6ft, slim/medium build, lots of interests including motorcycles, WLTW a kind and honest female to share fun times and laughter with. Box 445124 **📧**

EVERYTHING I DO

Lee, driver, 36yr old, 6ft3, dark hair, like pubs, clubs, wine bars, places of interest, sports and reading, WLTW a woman for friendship and romance. Box 889723 **📧**

TRUSTWORTHY

Margate man, 37, 6ft3, dark hair, nice big build. I work in residential care which I love. I'm down-to-earth, kind, tactile, with a GSOH. Box 423437 **📧**

R U 4 ME?

Down to earth, loyal guy, 36, looking for companionship, leading to a long-term relationship. Enjoys meals out, good company, conversation, cosiness in romance. Box 914917 **📧**

ROMANCE, COMPANIONSHIP?

Me, 39, 5ft6, blond hair, blue eyes, hard working, friendly, loves films and music, sports, football, karate...WLTW nice, slim, attractive lady for meals and more. Box 449167 **📧**

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BUSINESS BRIEFS

'Human capital' seen as key to firms' efficiency

ATTRACTING and retaining skilled employees is now seen as the most important source of using trade resources efficiently for UK businesses, according to new research.

In a poll of almost 200 senior executives, 83 per cent felt that in light of the current skills shortage, human capital was the key factor in having an edge over their competitors.

The survey, conducted for professional services group KPMG by Opinion Leader Research, found that the current skills shortage was the most pressing issue facing British organisations.

Kathy Lloyd, head of people services at KPMG in Kent, said: "The success of the UK increasingly relies on our ability to function as a highly skilled, hi-tech economy and employers are right to be concerned about the difficulty in finding staff equipped with both basic and more advanced skills."

According to the survey results, nearly three-quarters (74 per cent) of companies surveyed felt that the UK fell short in terms of skills, particularly literacy and numeracy.

Staff retention was cited as the second key people-issue that UK firms expect to face in the future and businesses are considering a raft of measures to counter this.

Most popular of these would be training and development (62 per cent), finding ways to retain top performers (61 per cent) and leadership development (59 per cent).

Women's Day invitation

SOUTH East businesswomen have been invited to a lunch on Thursday, March 12, to mark International Women's Day.

Organised as part of the South East England Development Agency (Seeda) Women's Enterprise Ambassadors Network, the speaker will be Caroline Marsh, who recently took part in Channel 4's Secret Millionaire series.

The lunch is at Nutfield Priory, Redhill. International Women's Day is a global event to mark the social, political and economic achievements of women.

Phone Joanna Brown at Prowse & Company on 01372 373386 or email joanna@prorowse.co.uk.

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Julie Maddocks asks: "In business, is small really beautiful?" Search 'crunch'

Act now to sustain a healthy bottom line

■ BY TONY PATEY

BUSINESS chiefs have been told to grasp the nettle and embrace sustainable commercial activity - or face the Government imposing regulations upon them.

An audience of high-powered county businesspeople were at last week's Institute of Directors/Business Link breakfast on sustainability in business.

David Boomer, head of energy efficiency and climate change at the IoD, said: "Sustainability is a business agenda which has been coming of age for some time, but it has to be a fundamental part of business."

"You can't talk about it without energy efficiency and climate change. The UK, for the future, has a huge skills gap. We need innovative sustainable skills with clear leadership and investment."

"If business doesn't respond, Government will regulate. We need to develop business and skills capacity."

He was speaking at the conference centre in Sittingbourne's Kent Science Park, a fitting venue because the park's senior management, led by director James Speck, is also keen to develop skills for the area and beyond.

He was introduced by Kent IoD chairman Frazer Thompson, who said: "Sustainability is something we can do without sacrificing winning new business."

Mr Thompson runs the Chapel Down wines group at Tenterden and he said it recently took a look at its own carbon footprint - and a half was in the wooden posts in the vineyard. They have since been swapped for metal ones.

Andrew Fletcher, managing director of Carbon Control energy conservation company, said: "From speaking to many business owners and managers it became apparent to me that businesses are in fact concerned about



SEE THE LIGHT: Sustainability and hi-tech skills are essential to the UK's future prosperity, delegates were told

reducing their energy consumption, costs and increasing their sustainability. However they sometimes lack the knowledge, expertise and time to tackle these issues."

He said businesses could access national and local grants - as well as support such as the Carbon Trust's interest-free loans - and they should also check out enhanced capital allowance schemes.

Erica Russell, Business Link's market development manager (sustainable business) said a company's green credentials should encompass its issues with energy, water, waste, raw materials, legislation and transport.

Paul Anderson, who runs Stone Circle Livery between Woodchurch and High Halden, which claims to be the UK's first and

only fully organic livery yard, gave a mini case study and stressed the need to be committed, determined and innovative.

High quality commands a premium rate and with the credit squeeze some customers left and a long waiting list vanished, he said.

However, he increased his rates but also increased the amount he had been setting aside for environmental improvements from each customer as well.

"Nothing happened - then the emails started to come through. It was a very worrying moment for us."

"From being in a dire situation a few months ago we are getting the customers coming back. It has put us on the national and international stage - we've had amazing PR."



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SECONDS OUT: A disastrous second round cost Benn Barham a chance to shine in Indonesia

Bogeys leave Benn out in the cold

GOLF

THREE bogeys at the start of the second round ruined European Tour golfer Benn Barham's chances of making the cut at the Indonesia Open.

The Ashford golfer was well placed heading into the second round after carding a one over par opening round of 73.

After a double bogey at the first hole, Barham recovered with two birdies on the front nine, on the way to a solid first round score.

A level par 72 would have seen Barham book his place for the final two rounds, but he could only shoot a three over par 75. The Chart Hills golfer missed the cut by three shots, finishing on four over par for the tournament in joint 84th position.

This is the third missed cut of the season for Barham and he will be hoping for better luck at the Madeira Islands Open on March 19. The tournament provided one of Barham's best results last season with a tied 15th finish.

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KOS Media go behind the scenes at the Brands Hatch 2009 launch day

Dartfordian defence keeps Ashford from making mark

RUGBY

■ BY TOM HOWARD

Dartfordians 20 Ashford 0

ASHFORD missed the chance to gain ground on the chasing pack in Kent 1 after a comprehensive defeat at Dartfordians.

After a number of postponements due to the wintry weather at the start of the year, Ashford finally got the chance to play one of their rescheduled fixtures.

The game was evenly matched for the first 15 minutes as both sides made errors, but the first score came on 20 minutes when Ashford gave away a penalty, which was duly converted by the home side.

Ten minutes later Ashford fell further behind as an error saw Dartfordians score a clinical interception try through Dan Phillips. The score remained 8-0 as the conversion was missed.

Ashford repeatedly tried to find a way through the Dartfordians defence, but on each occasion they were kept at bay.

Ashford were forced to go on the offensive in the second half to try and get a foothold in the game.

However, once again the home side's defence held firm and they put the pressure back on Ashford by securing the lion's share of possession.

That pressure eventually told on the Ashford defence and the home side managed to find a gap for another try.

Dartfordians wrapped up the victory with Dan Phillips' second try of the afternoon in the dying minutes, which made the final score 20-0.

Ashford will hope to put the defeat behind them when they travel to Gillingham Anchorians this Saturday.

In the earlier meeting between the two sides this season Ashford ran out comfortable 20-5 winners. A victory could move them up to sixth place in Kent 1 if other results go their way.



WHITEWASH: Ashford were unable to make ground on their Kent rivals, after failing to score at Dartfordians

Picture: IGBR/KIPPO



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Town branded 'awful' as they slump to third loss

FOOTBALL

BY TOM HOWARD

Croydon Athletic 5

Baidoo 17, 45, Clayton 8, OG E Brathwaite 45, Murray 65

Ashford Town 1

Wilkins 63

Ashford Town starting XI



Subs used: Browne (D Brathwaite 77) Lye (Humphreys 68)

However Croydon wrapped up the victory on 65 minutes with former Ebbsfleet midfielder Karl Murray's strike.

Langton said his side's first half performance cost them any chance of a point

"For the first 45 minutes we were awful," he said. "We were missing big players like Sean Ray and Paul Jones who have been brilliant for us, but the side we put out should have been good enough.

"Steve and I had words at the break and in the second half we played a lot better but it was always going to be difficult to get something out of it.

"Croydon are a good side and they will certainly have a say in the title race as they have to play a lot of the top sides in this league."

This worrying result means Ashford are seven points behind league leaders Kingstonian, but Lovell's side still have ten games remaining if they are to secure a place in the play-offs at the end of the season.



WILKO AND OUT: Craig Wilkins (pictured, right) grabbed a consolation goal in a heavy defeat at Croydon Athletic

FOOTBALL



NEW ADDITIONS: Hugo Langton and Steve Lovell hope to sign a couple more players

Beveney brings new hope Town can still reach the play-offs

NEW signing Shawn Beveney may not be the only addition to the Ashford Town squad as the race for the play-offs heats up in Ryman South, according to Hugo Langton.

The Guyana international striker made his Ashford debut in Saturday's 5-1 defeat at Croydon Athletic and showed glimpses of what he can produce, despite a limited service from midfield.

Beveney, who scored 32 times in 61 games for Dulwich Hamlet, has been on Steve Lovell and Hugo Langton's radar for a long time and they are delighted to have finally brought him to the Homelands.

Langton said: "Steve and I know a lot about Shawn and have watched him for a number of years. He is a big man and has a lot of pace and will certainly help us.

"He did well on Saturday, but he had very little service - he is desperate to score the goals to take the club up the table.

"He has been hit by injuries in the past, but he is over them and has had a trial at Leeds United which shows the quality he will bring to the team.

"We have brought him in, but we are still on the lookout for a couple of players so we have a strong squad going into the last few games."

After three consecutive defeats, Langton believes it is far too early to write off Ashford's chances of finishing in the play-offs this season.

He added: "There are ten games to go and any one of eight teams can still win the title. Myself and Steve have worked hard to get the team in the top half of the league and we are not prepared to give up."



ON TRACK: Ashford men got their season back on course with consecutive wins

Men win again to dig clear of drop zone

HOCKEY

Epsom 1 Ashford 2

BACK to back wins for the first time this season helped Ashford's men pull away from the relegation zone in South Hockey League Division Two.

Goals from Sam Handley and Chris Pearce completed a 2-1 win for Ashford against eighth-placed Epsom. The result means Ashford, who were bottom of the league at the start of February, move up to ninth place.

Ashford bid for three wins on the bounce when they host league leaders Wimbledon this Saturday. A victory could move Chris Smith's side up to eighth.

The ladies' 1st XI also tasted victory with a 3-0 win against Kent Premier basement side Gravesend. The result has moved Ashford up to fifth. Next up for the ladies is a trip to struggling Cliftonville this Saturday.



OFF THE BAT: Geraint Jones could bat at number three again for Kent this season

Keeper still has his sights set on return to England

KENT wicketkeeper Geraint Jones is eyeing a place in the club's top order next season as a way of proving his form and putting himself back in contention for an England spot.

The 32-year-old finished the 2008 campaign batting at number three for Kent, where he scored a sparkling 91 against Lancashire at Aigburth.

A chance to bat at first wicket down is a possibility again this year and having resumed training just two months after the end of the disappointing 2008 campaign, Jones is hoping to hit the ground running.

"I'm keen on getting off to a good start because I felt good batting at the end of last year. I didn't want that to stall for six months so I felt I would do some work and push for the new season," he told Yourashford.

"I have based my winter practice around the idea I may bat at three. I enjoyed it last year and had some success there. I was given the suggestion that there is the potential to start there again this year."

Whenever interviewed, the obvious question

CRICKET

of a return to the England side always pops up.

While the Papua New Guinea-born glove-man is hopeful of a return to the international stage, his chances of joining old team-mates Andrew Flintoff and Steve Harmison in this year's Ashes look remote at best. He competed in both the last two Ashes series.

Jones said: "I don't know where I sit really. I'm not sure if I have been thrown on the scrapheap or whether or not I have been put in the Duncan Fletcher era and they've moved on, I don't know.

"I have got the experience of being there, but ultimately it's up to me to go out there and score the runs and leave it there in the selectors' hands.

"I don't want to be thinking 'I need to score runs to get back into the England side', I want to score runs to enjoy my cricket and that's most important."

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Gills first-team coach Mark Robson talks about his hopes for the future

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